The Role of 'A'ishah in the History of Islam

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Volume One

`A`ishah in the time of the prophet Until the end of `Uthman`s caliphate`



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Preface by the Persian translator

In the Name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Ailment and remedy

1-Ailment

Intense fanaticism, blind following, undue respect shown to so-called pious individuals of the nation and lack of courage in investigating the life history, morals and mentality accompanied by a careful survey and discussion of all aspects of the period in which they lived, have been major factors for the Muslims' indigence, and the reason for the dispersion and retardation of the Islamic society.

Fourteen centuries of Islamic history have gone by, but not all the Muslims have heard of this history which is related to them, nor of the critical and important events which have been the main factor in the course of such a history for Islam. Various political factors, too, have had a significant role in this connection.

Today all are cognizant of the fact that in every society and nation, employment of self-interest and influence, and promotion of personal motives through religion facilitate the attainment of a decisive result for this reason, alteration of facts, fabrication and propagation of false stories and non-factual matters and creation of false subjects are the factors which have been employed in every period and country in order to promote personal motives and political aims. In this way, the basis of differences and dispersion among the Muslims has been greatly, reinforced and those who have held position and power have spared no effort in employing all methods to intensify these differences in order to attain their political designs.

With the passage of years and centuries, and concentration of misinterpreted and altered subjects and stories in minds, their penetration into the beliefs and thoughts and their transfer from one generation to another have eventually led to such conditions which have been faced by nations for many centuries. Hence there has come about a history which has perplexed all sound minds, wondering how to have access to true facts in this regard.

2-Remedy

This deviation from truth is not only in the history of Islam. Every nation and religion too has a similar history. But it is certain that truth does not perish, and however strong the means of deviation may be, it cannot generally be eliminated. But what is meanwhile important is the endeavor to discover and bring the truth out of thousands of false statements and announcing it decisively with acceptable arguments. What has been achieved by the lofty scholar Sayyid Murtada ‛Askári in his famous book "A<u>ha</u>dith of ‛Umm al-Mu'minin ‛<u>A</u>'ishah" has shown a new way for seekers of truth. The author has written the present book which describes the facts and events of early Islam, by means of perusing many books of history and tradition about the validity of which all world Muslims are unanimous, and he has set forth clear and decisive arguments and evidence about which no doubt or ambiguity remains and he has left it all for the public to judge.

On the suggestion of the author, I translated the said book entitled "The Role of ‛<u>A</u>'ishah in the History of Islam" when I was on an official mission to Baghdad. But its printing was postponed for some years; this delay, however, proved to be fortunate, since the present book secured some advantages over the original text in several ways, and after a recent meeting with the author in Tehran, the following points were agreed to:

1-It contains the accounts and introduction written by scholar <u>Ha</u>mid <u>H</u>afn<u>i</u> D<u>a</u>w<u>u</u>d in praise of the book, together with its translation.

2-The reason for the plurality of the Prophet's wives, described by the author, has been added to the present book.

3-A more detailed account has been given of the personalities who were dealt with briefly earlier in the notes.

4-A more detailed account has been given of the great men of learning who played a significant role in the course of Islamic history, and this account has been transferred from the notes to the main text.

5-The Quranic chapter ‘at-Tahrim” and the cause of its descent have been wholly included after the brief story of Mariyah.

In following up the admirable way adopted by the author, the translation into Persian has been carried out impartially and free from any prejudice and personal feelings, and without any alteration or expression of likes and dislikes.

May this minor contribution succeed in revealing the true facts and causes of the course taken by the present history of Islam, and be acceptable to Unique God, and approved by men of learning and research.

Now that the first volume of this book is offered for the general public for judgment, it is hoped that men of enlightenment, knowledge and discernment will offer their views, criticisms and suggestions impartially and without taking side with any particular sect, and thus guide and help the writer to remove any deficiencies, which may exist now, in his effort to produce a faultless edition in future. In this way, they may render a worthy service to the world of Islam.

In conclusion, I must express thanks to my learned friend Mr. Muhammad Husayn Mujahid for encouraging me to translate this book and for undertaking the labor of its collation.

‘Ata Muhammad Sardar-Niya
Tehran, October 1967

A part of the introduction by
Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawud
Professor of Arabic Literature at the Cairo University Language Faculty

Facts

Ibn Mas'ud's method of guidance

"The truest of words is the Book of God, and the way of salvation is the one shown by our lord Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). The worst of deeds is innovation which causes deviation that ends with the fire of hell."

Thus spoke 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud (May God be pleased with him) to his companion peers and to his pupils and followers, describing the signs of the ways of religion.

When he spoke of knowledge, he meant the highest goal, which has been sought by religious scholars and seekers of truth in discovering the truth alone and avoiding deviation and wrong words. He said: Attainment of truth is not possible except through two fundamental principles of the noble religion of Islam, namely the Book of God and the utterances of His prophet, the former being the highest and noblest truth ever uttered in the past and present, which cannot be excelled in future, and whose validity will never be diminished.

Why should it not be so? The reason is that it has descended from God Almighty, and mankind has confessed his own weakness and inability before the eloquence of its phrases and its brilliant truth. It is the most decisive evidence for the prophet hood of Muhammad. Next are the utterances of an untaught and unlettered Prophet, an exalted personality through whom the heavenly Book has been communicated to the people all over the world; a person who has not offered anything on his own behalf, nor has he added anything on his own behalf, nor has he added anything of his own, nor given

any instructions except for the inspirations received from the source of divine revelation.

His words rose from the heart, and they were nothing but heavenly inspirations sent to him by Great God. In the Qur'an God has praised him and spoken well of his character, and said:

"And most surely you conform yourself to *sublime morality."*[1]

Therefore what has come from these two valid sources must be a clear and absolute truth into which. doubt or ambiguity cannot find its way, whereas anything that has not been derived from those two sources is exposed to evaluation and criticism, and is subject to changes and modifications, and also to the estimation of its beauty and ugliness.

An alert and clear-sighted reader may have understood our purpose in quoting the words of that exalted companion of the Prophet who began his remarks with such wise phrases. In his description of the ways of religion and the sacred laws of Islam, he draws the attention of the listener directly to the Book of God and His prophet's tradition, and advises him to follow those two principles, namely a book about whose words, phrases, and apparent form and arrangement all are unanimous and have no differences, and a tradition and lifestyle which have been handed down by the Prophet to chaste and virtuous individuals namely men who had no intention of attributing any falsehood or misconduct to the Prophet of Islam.

Let us know the truth and its supporters

Another point that we deduce from that sincere and wise utterance is that these two sources are immune from any questioning and safe from any criticism and alteration, whereas everything else is subject to evaluation, and about which a verdict is issued with the aid of intellect and knowledge, and is subject to analysis and criticism, in order to distinguish the difference between jewels and shells, and right and wrong. On this course, we have no fear in facing other sources and their authors even if they may possess a high rank in the Islamic society and dignity among the people and

may be among the Prophet's companions. The reason is that our purpose is to seek truth and right, and also because the Prophet's companions have not all possessed the same level of justice, knowledge and accuracy in preserving the exact words and phrases of the Prophet of God, and like many other human beings they may have been subject to forgetfulness, error and blunder. Some of them have followed the path of truth in elaborating on the Prophet's tradition, while others may have erred in it. Some of them possessed a strong memory, while some others had been forgetful; a number may have been steadfast in faith, while others were fickle and perplexed; some were sincere devotees, while others were hypocrites!

The Qur'an itself confirms this point where it says:

"And from among those who are round about you of the dwellers of the desert there are hypocrites, and from among the people of Medina also; they are stubborn in hypocrisy; you do not know them; We know them; We will chastise them twice, then shall they be turned back to a grievous chastisement." (2)

With this state of affairs in early days of Islam, we cannot consider all the companions to be on an equal footing and regard all the standard-bearers of Islam as being wholly chaste; for, since the appearance of man on the earth and formation of society, he has always shown his various aspects including the highest degrees of integrity and justice as well as the lowest level of hypocrisy and hindrance. Historical evidence and statistics, gained from the study of various peoples and societies since the creation of Adam, confirm this view. But the principle of change in religious communities and the manner of invitation towards the path of truth reached the height of perfection in the person of Muhammad and his friends, for, no other Prophet has brought such an exalted and steadfast law,. and no friends of any other Prophet have equaled the friends of our Prophet in devotion to religion and immensity of number.

But the honor of companionship with the Prophet which have given a particular rank and dignity to his friends, have not checked some of them from causing derangement m his injunctions through self-interest and showing lack of devotion

to his laws and commands. Consequently, there is no reason why we should exempt the leaders and pioneers of Islam from the general law of investigation and criticism solely owing to their companionship with the Prophet; for, they have not been of equal weight from the viewpoint of justice. For instance, despite intense insistence and desire of the Prophet for the guidance of all human beings towards the path to perfection, there were some individuals in whose heart Islam did not easily find its way, and also there were some who had hidden infidelity and hypocrisy behind the mask of Islam.

The Qur'an clearly describes the lofty ideas of the Prophet and his deep and sincere interest in guiding people on to the path of truth, and it has, on several occasions, spoken of his attitude and sacred ideals. It says at one place:

"Therefore do remind, for, you are only a reminder. You are not a watcher over them(3)

And elsewhere it says:

"Surely you cannot guide whom you love but Allah guides whom He pleases."(4)

And at another place it says:

"Therefore do remind, surely reminding does profit. "(5)

There are also many such verses in the Qur'an which confirm the insistence of this great reformer of mankind, and his deep desire to guide all people, and especially his sympathy and kindness upon the order of God, towards those persons who are still wayward and have not had the privilege of finding the true path, having been separated from the followers of the divine path.

Support of Islam

All the above points show that the glory and greatness of Islam are based on its laws and teachings, not on its followers, and this greatness is not the product of the support and confirmation by its followers so as to expose it to annihilation

I myself believe that if the entire world rises to fight and joins hands to destroy it, there cannot be inflicted the slights damage upon its glory and greatness. Similarly, if the whole world join hands to glorify and support it, nothing can be

added to that glory and greatness; for, the secret of Islam lies in its lofty principles, and the secret of those principles lies in themselves not in the visage of its followers. This is a point
which is understood only by true scholars and learned people. Therefore, if the pioneers of Islam and the Prophet's companions are subjected to discussion and criticism and their life, words and deeds are analyzed in detail in order to introduce the wicked and dishonest persons to the world of Islam, no damage will be done to Islam and its spiritual truth. On the contrary, an Islam, which Lays the foundation of justice through its injunctions, and declares the equality of all human beings in the eyes of the law, will allow such a survey and criticism, and particularly insist upon such an investigation and criticism for the sake of discovering truth and leading people towards their right destination.

Why should we go that far? The great reformer of humanity, Muhammad, has in his wise guidance, directly and indirectly encouraged us to follow truth alone and accept and support truth only because of its being right irrespective of individuals, even if it were in the interest of a poor and helpless person, and also to rise up against falsehood and corruption, even if it is to the detriment of a noble and distinguished individual, and to make no discrimination between the noble and ignoble for the enforcement of divine punishments.

Muhammad and enforcement of justice

It is narrated in the traditions of Sahih that Usamah ibn Zayd whose father and himself were respected by the Prophet, one day interceded with him to exempt a noble woman of Quraysh who had committed theft, from being given due punishment, but that great reformer and divine Prophet refused to accept this intercession and uttered his well-known and everlasting remark about this matter, saying: "O people! Your predecessors wasted away everything of theirs! They let alone a noble person, who had committed theft, whereas they punished a weak and unknown thief'. I swear to God that if Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, committed theft, I would cut off her hand!"

It was with such final words that the Prophet, the founder of the principles of justice and equality, refused not to enforce the punishment prescribed, by heavenly laws upon that noble woman, of aL-Makhzumi tribe, despite her high rank and dignity among her own people. (6)

In this way, the Prophet abolished class differences hundreds of years before theorists of communism tried ‘to remove them. At a time when he declared the law of justice and equality, he made all people equal under that law, and gave personal help to abstemious, shelter less and distressed people against the powerful and infamous tyrants. This law has been clearly expressed in the Qur’an, and holy’ and prophetic traditions. The Qur’an says:

"0 you men! Surely We have, created you of *a male and a female, and made you tribes and families that you. may know each other, surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful of his duty.* "(7)

The holy tradition says: "Whoever puts into practice my order, will have heaven for his abode even, if he is an Abyssinian slave, and he who disobeys will have the fire of hell for his seat, even if he is a dignitary of the Quraysh." Most of the noble traditions of the Prophet are manifest examples of the height of humanity and justice.

The close and distant friends of Muhammad

Where the Prophet speaks of future and unveils occurrences, he describes his companions after his, demise as follows: some of them will proceed worthily in the way of God, while some others will deviate; a number rise up against justice, while others will resort to mutiny and injustice.

He addressed ‘Ammar and said: "O ‘Ammar! You will be killed by a group of rebellious and tyrannical individuals!" And he said to ‘Ali:"O ‘Ali! Do you know the most miserable of past and future people?" ‘All answered: "God and His prophet are more aware." The Prophet said: "The most miserable of past people was he who cut off the leg of the Thamud tribe’s camel; and the most miserable of the future persons is he who kills you." (8)

All these points show that without any doubt the Prophet’s

companions differ from each other in terms of their rank and position like other people. Some of them have attained the highest degree of perfection, virtue and humanity, whereas some others have remained in the abyss of meanness and corruption, and not all of them have succeeded to gain honour as companions of the Prophet or to find the way leading to truth and perfection, and thus to win equality with others.

This being the case, would this law that believes the companions and other people are equal in the religion of Islam and makes dignity and superiority dependent upon the degree of chastity and performance of sacred injunctions of Islam, not be the most adequate reason for that group of people who have not yet abandoned the way of caution, to permit a discussion and a critical survey of the Prophet’s companions? A companion who has not followed the path of truth and has not submitted to the sacred law of Islam, cannot claim a distinction only by being a companion of the Prophet, in the same way that the people of our own time who have been separated greatly from the era of the Prophet, but have fully understood his holy principles and have been deeply influenced by Islam, cannot be reproached for not having lived in the Prophet’s time and not having had the good fortune of being his companions.

In fact, there are many individuals who are near in appearance, but far in reality, whereas there may be many who are far in appearance, and yet close in reality. In my opinion, we and the Prophet’s companions are equal in our call for truth and the need for propagating the exalted laws of Islam.

Indeed, the greatest distinction gained by the Prophet’s companions in benefiting from his association has been their opportunity to have personal contact with and received direct command from the master of the faith. It should be remembered that this distinction has no more than two aspects: Firstly, the great blessing of his companionship and receiving his direct command without intermediary, and secondly it is the most convincing sign and decisive argument for the companion himself.

If the companionship with the Prophet could, in itself,

provide the means for his intercession on the day of resurrection, and protect the companion from criticism, and keep him immune from hardships and upheaval of time, and prevent the issuance of a verdict by the Muslims for or against him, the Prophet would never have uttered these historical and everlasting words to his dearest child: "O Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet of God! Ask me whatever you wish, for before the threshold of divine justice, the fact of your being the daughter of the Prophet will be of no avail to you."[9]

This historical statement was uttered by the Prophet to his daughter on the day when the following verse descended to him: "Inform your close relations." Indeed, the lofty principles laid down by the Prophet about justice and equality consider all people equally in carrying out the punishments based on Islamic injunctions.

The author as viewed by Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawud

Some time ago, research scholar Mr. Murtada 'Askari presented his book 'Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah" to men of learning and scholars, especially to two groups of readers who fervently sought truth, heartily desired to discern the philosophy of Islamic history, and comprehend the reasons and history of the canon law and its principles. He engaged himself in this research at a time when he came across undeniable documents concerning the life of Umm al Mu'minin 'A'ishah, and he made use of them to present the truth, and express his views freely. However telling the truth and seeking it are regarded as an unforgivable offence by the short sighted and by those who think it improper to criticize and issue a verdict of any kind against each of the Prophet's companions, since they themselves have enforced a limit for this survey and investigations about those companions.

Mr. 'Askari has, in his book, fully adopted the method of critics and researchers by employing scientific sequence and scrutiny, and explained in his introduction the difficulties and obstacles which existed in the way of investigation for all seekers of truth. One of these obstacles may be a scholar's attachment to his own feelings and partiality, causing him to prefer one group or personality to another, due to his

prejudice, while this may be contrary to truth. Or owing to self-interest and adverse motive, he may resort to every trick in order to conceal truth. This is the way of some writers who try to establish some concordance between two opposite views. This concordance may seem agreeable, but it is obvious that two contrary views and aspects cannot be brought together to create harmony.

Mr. 'Askari has succeeded in removing in his own discussion such defects, which exist in the way of every scholar's investigation. He pursues a definite goal from which he has not deviated, and he has not made personalities and authorities the axis of his task, since his aim has been to discover truth.

Moreover, he has been able to lay aside his own feelings and inclinations, and allow perfect freedom to intellect alone in issuing verdicts, avoiding all blind and misleading prejudices, and showing no preference to one group over another, even if that group belongs to his own sect. It would be no exaggeration to say that Mr. 'Askari has laid down a firm and steadfast rule in the method of his investigation. What mostly attracts scholars apart from the apparent form of this book and wins their praise and admiration is the fact that he has been able to observe the general law in his7 scientific discussion, and analyze the traditions of Umm alMu'minin with perfect care and caution, and thus reveal the truth with all its manifestations.

'**Ali's assassination and 'A'ishah's praise of God**

Historical evidence compels us to express doubt about some of the traditions of Umm al-Mu'minin such as the traditions which speak of the caliphate of the two elders (Abu Bakr and 'Umar) without a mention of 'Ali and also the traditions related to the qualities of the two elder caliphs and 'Uthman and 'Ails ways, since in these traditions, feeling and interest have played an important role, for, her relationship with Abu Bakr was one between a daughter and father. Similarly, her words about 'Umar are very different from her expressions about 'Ali who was considered a rival of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. Also, her rise against 'Uthman and her incitement of people to

shed his blood, and then her uprising, for the sake of avenging his death, are other arguments, which make us, doubt the truth of her words.

In the same way, her actions against 'Ali her aids to his enemies and her alliance with Talhah and az-Zubayr who had broken their vow with 'Ali and her starting the fire of the battle of al-Jamal, are all clear examples of her rancor and long-standing hostility towards such a chaste Imam as 'Ali using those acts as a means to create division and dispersion among the Muslims. She felt such a pain in her heart about 'Ali that it gave her no tranquility. Even when she heard the news of the Imam's assassination, she prostrated herself to thank God, and recited a couplet expressing her feeling.

Each of her traditions is related to one of such important historical events, which should be treated with caution, and discovery of truth gives her a higher position than her personality and one's own inclinations.

Moreover, a companion of the Prophet may, like other people, err in his verdict and judgment, since so long as a human being, whoever he may be, acts upon his own opinion and taste, he may be right or wrong. But an investigator has no right to lay aside wisdom and intelligence, humble himself before great personalities, and conceal the truth. He is not permitted in his evaluation, to place right and wrong views on the same level. His duty is to state the truth in its full sense.

In addition, when we agree that every authority may err and blunder and hence will be called to account at the threshold of divine justice, Umm al-Mu'minin will not be exempted from this rule, and no injustice is done to her. From the viewpoint of scientific and research method, injustice occurs when we give a prejudiced judgment about 'Ali and 'A'ishah and consider them to be equal from the viewpoint of justice, or when we regard 'Ali, who proceeded in the right path, as an authority to be at par with those who had gone astray, such as 'A'ishah, Mu'awiyah and other companions who rose in opposition to and dispute with 'Ali.

'Ali regarded God as his governor

'Ali, not in his capacity as the "Gate of the City of Knowledge"

and the Guardian appointed by Muhammad, not only because he uttered the truth strongly and explicitly and defended it staunchly and thus gave religion strength and consistency, and not because of all the above qualities, but on account of the fact that he has been the possessor of all the attributes of perfection in its full sense, has attained his status.

What has placed ‘Ali above everyone else is the fact that in all his words and deeds, he regarded God as his supervisor and a watchful governor, and was strict upon himself in the interest of the Muslims, preferring public and Muslim society’s interests to his own and worldly gains. During his Caliphate, the noblest stage of humanity and perfection of a human being is distinguished in such a rank and position. He, in this period in particular, was a perfect model in his food, dress, justice of his verdicts, and avoidance of the deceptive manifestation of the world.

While others exerted great efforts to secure Caliphate, in the case of ‘Au it was caliphate itself, which hastened towards him. Others preferred their interests and -those of their relatives to public interests, but ‘Ali placed public interests before those of his own and his kinsmen.

At the time ‘Ali was in Kufah, his brother ‘Aqil ibn Abi Talib joined him. *‘Ali* welcomed and asked him why he had come to Kufah. ‘Aqjl said: “My salary is not adequate for, our livelihood, and the high cost of living in Medina has put me heavily in debt. I have come to ask for your help to save me from this situation.”

‘Mi said: “I swear to God that I have nothing but my own salary. So you must wait until the due time of payment so that you may receive it instead of me.”

‘Aqil said: “Do you think that I have come so far from Hejaz in the hope of receiving your salary? Of what worth is your share of salary to me? How can it solve my problem?”

The chaste Imam answered: “Do you know of any worldly goods belonging to me? Or do you expect God to burn time in the fire of hell for offering Muslims’ funds to a relative?”

Thus ‘Aqjl who could not tolerate the justice of a chaste Imam as ‘Mi, turned to and joined Mu’awiyah who made no distinction between legitimate and illegitimate acts, and

regarded public funds as his personal property.

This event acquaints us with ‘Ali’s personality and the extent of his chastity and degree of preferring public interests to those of himself and his kinsmen.

It can be claimed without any doubt that none of the Prophet’s companions but ‘Ali had attained such a height of humanity and perfection; or, he himself has, in all sincerity, uttered his famous and immortal phrase saying: “O world, deceive others but not me!”

‘Ali and the Caliphate

I do not think there is any companion of the Prophet whose verdict and authority may not be subject to comments except ‘Ali about whose authority there does not exist the slightest room for criticism. I make this statement with full courage since it is confirmed by all the political events that have occurred in Islam.

‘Umar interfered in the matter of caliphate with the result that Abu Bakr succeeded to get that position. In his decree he argued that he had checked riot and sedition, and after Abu Bakr he shouldered that heavy responsibility, and on many occasions, confessed his own mistake in giving his verdict in favor of Abu Bakr’s caliphate. At that time when some of the companions spoke to him about the allegiance to his son ‘Abd Allah he answered: “It is enough for ‘Umar’s household to have one person responsible and to be called to account at the threshold of divine justice about Muhammad’s ummah.” But ‘Ali explained, contrary to the two elders and concerning the matter of caliphate, that he was engaged in a more important task, namely preparing the body of the Prophet for burial.[(10)]

This was the greatest criticism leveled always against Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, showing, ‘Ali to be entitled against those two.

In the election of the caliph after ‘Umar, ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn ‘Awf gave his verdict upon ‘Ali and ‘Uthman who were two of the six candidates for the Caliphate nominated by ‘Umar, and notified to those two the duty of the caliph in relation to his own verdict. Although he knew that ‘Ali would not submit to his authority, he began first by proposing to ‘Ali the

acceptance of the terms of caliphate.

'Ali accepted that duty to the extent of his power and ability, and assurance of his conscience before God and His prophet. But 'Uthman in order not to let the chance of caliphate escape him, accepted unconditionally all those I conditions, irrespective of his power and ability.

In accepting the terms of the son of 'Awf, 'Ali was more eager to win the consent of God and His prophet, and Muslims' interests than to gain the position of caliph and command, whereas 'Uthman cherished that position rather than anything else. God knows whether, at the outset, 'Uthman possessed perfect discernment of the task faced by him, or whether he realized it, later on, since this is an internal matter about which we cannot issue a verdict and we can only judge by appearance.

Historical verdicts of 'A'ishah

At first 'A'ishah agreed to 'Uthman's caliphate and confirmed it. Then she turned against him and gave an opposite verdict. For that reason, her authority is not reliable. But 'Ali, despite establishing the reasons for his rivalry with 'Uthman on the issue of caliphate, did not, unlike 'A'ishah, rise in conflict with Uthman.

After 'Uthman was killed, 'Ali refused to accept allegiance of Talhah and az-Zubayr except in the mosque and in the presence of all people, and when they forced him to accept caliphate, he rose in the mosque and said:" I was weary of becoming your caliph, but you favored only my command. Remember that I shall take no step except with your approval and advice. I hold the keys to your public funds, but I shall never take one drachma of it without your approval." Then he asked: "Do you agree to this?" The people shouted their agreement, and 'Ali said: "O God! Be their witness," and then he accepted the caliphate.

'Ali had made the right decision and thus he left no excuse for people, since it was they who forced him to accept that position and not because he himself desired it. Therefore, anyone who shirked his duty and opposed 'Ali, would be a traitor and guilty, and he who remained loyal would be a true

believer.

'A'ishah resorted to a verdict once again, namely when she rose to oppose the murderers of 'Uthman and avenge his murder, and formally collaborated with Talhah and az-Zubayr who had broken their pact with 'Ali and trampled upon their allegiance with him. This motivated action showed that it was not free from spite and grudge so that the people accused her of having risen, not to avenge 'Uthman's blood, but intending to cause division and dispersion among the Muslims and scattering people from around 'Ali. Had there been anyone else in 'Ali's place, she would not have resorted to such an action.

Umm Salamah's historical letter to 'A'ishah

'A'ishah's action in fighting 'Ali was the second split that occurred in the foundation of Islam after 'Umar's move with regard to caliphate. This statement is not a personal opinion expressed for a particular motive. They are undeniable acts about which just leaders of nations and well-known impartial historians are unanimous.

The action of 'A'ishah has been despised by supporters of justice and truth since the time of the Prophet's companions. A witness to this claim is Umm Salamah, another consort of the Prophet. She wrote a Letter of counsel to 'A'ishah, asking her to abstain from this action, and warned her against the Creation of division and dispersion among the Muslims. The letter goes Like this:

"From Umm Salamah, wife of the Prophet of God, to 'A'ishah, Umm al-Mu'minin.

I praise Unique God and confess His uniqueness. But now, you have, with your action, torn the veil of respect between the Prophet of God (p.b.u.h.) and his nation, and desecrated it. The Qur'an has gathered 'up your skirt; so do not obstinately drag it along. Your rank and position are secure; so do not lose them in a futile manner. Fear Unique God Who is the guardian of this ummah!

If the Prophet of God had considered it worthy of women to fight, he would certainly have issued a command in this connection. Do you not know that he has forbidden you from

challenging others. For, if any deviation takes place in the pillar of religion, it will never be corrected by the force of women, and not repaired by them. The holy war of women is to observe self-control, chastity and contentment.

If the exalted Prophet sees you driving your camel in the desert form one watering place to another, what will you say to him? You are bound to hasten towards him sooner or later. I dare say that if they tell me: ‘O Umm Salamah, enter heaven’, I would feel ashamed in meeting the Prophet while I have shown disrespect to him.

Therefore, veil yourself and remain peacefully in your house. You will be doing the greatest service to this nation if you do nothing for them. I know also that if I were to inform you of a remark I have from the holy Prophet, you will writhe like one bitten by a snake! That is all.”

This letter is another evidence that ‘A’ishah had erred in her judgment, and confirms this point that the reason for her uprising had not really been others’ interest in society and solidarity of the Muslims. Moreover, none of the consorts of the Prophet assisted her in this uprising.

The author’s goal in this book

Mr. ‘Askari, may God reward him for his truthfulness, has never intended, in his precise scientific discussion, to rouse people against ‘A’ishah despite her errors in issuing a verdict in her uprising. During his discussion, he has tried to correct the ideas on historical events in the minds of most people who have not been able to understand the Prophet’s companions, and have failed to distinguish right and wrong from their utterances, and have consequently been deprived of understanding proper history and its basis and also Islamic canon laws. By his efforts in this regard he has also sought that people understand the Prophet’s traditions without being affected by feelings and minor interests and prejudice towards the narrators of tradition, but with the use of their knowledge.

The reason is that if the people understand the whole or a part of the Prophet’s traditions they will easily become aware of the secret behind differences between Islamic sects and jurisprudentially creeds, and will realize to what extent these

differences are artificial and a product of those rulers who, because of particular motives, preferred one party over another, and fabricated any tradition that they desired in order to reinforce the foundation of their rule and strengthen their own group. Or they may have compelled some companions of the Prophet to alter or misinterpret some of those traditions. It was preferable for them to depict a companion as liar and deduce something from his statement that would serve their own interest and thus strengthen their rule.

Before ending my scientific discussion which has been undertaken to please God, I wish to advise Mr. ʽAskari to make use of his scientific subject of this discussion for a higher purpose, namely bringing various Islamic sects closer and lay a firmer foundation as desired by learned and enlightened people, in order to bring about unity and solidarity among the Muslims. It is quite possible that he, while deeply involved with research, may follow this suggestion in practice since there does not exist an inherent basic difference between a moderate Shi'ah and an intelligent Sunni, and there is no doubt that each of these two sects, so long as they pursue a single goal and are sincere in their purpose, will make utmost efforts to remove defects and refine one another.

Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawud
Cairo, College of Languages
23 March 1962

The motive for writing this book

"And if Allah pleases He would certainly make you a single nation."
The Qur'an, chapter an-Nahl, Verse 93

Many researchers in noble traditions of the Prophet of Islam have, since long ago, realized that there exist wide differences between some of these traditions themselves, and also between them and the verses of the divine Book. The result was that some of the past scholars decided to account for and interpret these differences in order to remove objections to the Prophet and his traditions, and they wrote books entitled: "Ta'wil mukhtalif al-hadith" [11],"Bayan mushkil al-hadith"[12] "Bayn mushkilat al-athar"[13] etc., which roused the hostility of such critics as atheists and Christian- missionaries, and a group of orientalists so that by reliance on the contradictions and differences of these traditions, they could reproach the Prophet of Islam and deride and criticize his religion. But both groups were ignorant of the fact that the great collection of traditions, especially those which contradict each other, have not been written in the same style to make them confident that all of them have come from and have been stated exactly by the Prophet so that these could be subjected to a single general survey. They are a collection of several different traditions, which have reached us from various narrators. A researcher must first classify them in connection with the type of narrators. For example, the traditions related to 'A'ishah Umm al-Mu'minin Anas[14] Abu Hurayrah[15] 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar [16] must each be collected separately and compared in conjunction with the traditions of other narrators who have quoted from the

Prophet (with due attention to the life story, views and ideas of each of them) in order to discover truth.

I realized this matter when I was investigating the historical events of early Islam through traditions. I was particularly attracted by the traditions quoted from 'Aishah Umm alMu'minin and I was convinced that the history of Islam from the beginning of the Prophet's ordainment until the allegiance with Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah will not be understood properly unless Umm al-Mu'minin's traditions which are one of the most important source of the history of early Islam, are studied and evaluated impartially, and solely for the sake of finding the truth.

I believe also that understanding some verses of the heavenly Book as well as Islamic jurisprudence for whose explanation reference is made to the Ahadith of Umm al-Mu'ninin depends on a previous study of these traditions.

As I intended to discuss and organize the history of the critical Islamic period, I was obliged to give priority to the evaluation of these traditions before dealing with other topics. A discussion of such matters especially concerning the leaders of early Islam involves certain difficulties, which are not very easy for a Muslim scholar to remove.

Let us investigate impartially

The first difficulty for an oriental Muslim writer is to deal with views with which he has been accustomed and brought up, and which have influenced his life and mentality and taken deep roots in all aspects of his existence, as well as the beliefs possessed by his society.

He regards the personalities of early Islam to be superior to other human beings, and considers their time and the people of their time more holy, and his belief about them and their time is different from that about others and their time.

If such a writer is unable to remove this difficulty in his discussion and research, his subject will become just the defense of his beliefs instead of seeking truth.

As I realized this fact, I decided especially in this connection, not to give attention to my feelings concerning the respect I felt for 'A'ishah Umm al-Mu'minin as a consort of the Prophet,

observe no discrimination between revered Islamic personalities and others who happened to enter the discussion, and attribute to them various feelings and motives that all people have, so that after analyzing the events which have occurred during the life of Umm al-Mu'minin I would be able to discuss and survey her words and traditions for the discovery of truth alone.

Although I do not claim complete success in this determination, I have used my utmost endeavor for this purpose, and I leave it to others to judge. But I take God as my witness in saying that only the hope of assisting the scholars to investigate the true story of early Islam and the Quranic injunctions has been my motive in the study and survey of this subject.

Islam or faith and belief

Secondly, if he succeeds in removing the above difficulty in his investigation, there figures another problem, namely the effect of the publication of such topics on coordination and unity among the Muslims. Now this question arises that since with the efforts of the strivers and reformers of Islam, the hopes and expectations of various groups of Muslims have, to some extent, been fulfilled and they are brought close to each other and the means of their brotherhood and solidarity have been provided, will it be proper to describe in detail the past events and publish matters which not only produce violent refutation and criticism but also rouse dormant feelings and produce aversion and hatred?

But opposed to this question, the following matter must be brought up which cannot be easily disregarded. If on the excuse of the futility of benevolent reformers' effort, such a discussion and investigation would not be acceptable, in that case, no one will engage in scientific research, and this would be an unpardonable injustice to knowledge, consequently, the facts of Islam would, as in former centuries, remain hidden behind the veil of mental rigidity and futile fanaticism, and as a result the discord and differences among various Islamic sects would manifest themselves more intensely. This is certainly not something to be approved by reformers and those who are interested in Islamic solidarity.

Consequently, while we sincerely desire the success of our Muslim brethren in laying aside all differences and uprooting dispersion, in response to the call of the benevolent reformers of Islam, we feel a particular respect for learning and knowledge and regard them as belonging to a different category; for, those who have endeavored constantly to lay the foundations of Muslim unity and solidarity, proclaim that solidarity under the sacred banner of Islam, while Islam, in itself, has no international political motivation. But it is a faith and belief in a set of realities born only out of a perfectly scientific criticism, discussion and research, and in concealing those facts under such excuses and pretexts, no single and firm faith, or belief would be produced, and the proper and direct course of Islam would not be distinguished from the pitfall of perdition and aberration.

I beg God Almighty to grant us success in following the right path, for,it is He who guides all to the right path.

Deep Islamic solidarity

The third difficulty that arises is the outcry that is the main stimulant of that faith and rises from the heart. It is a faith in the fact that only Islam should govern the Muslim society and serve as the foundation of our social solidarity. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to make constant efforts for reviving Islamic life and give it a solid foundation.

O strivers in the way of truth, may God grant you success! Do you not invite all the Muslims to return to Islam, and submit to its principles and enforce its laws? What is the way of understanding Islamic principles and injunctions? Is it other than a survey and research, from the beginning of its history, and discovery of the true traditions of the great Prophet as well as a study of the life and ideas of their narrators, so that by this means, we may comprehend the cause of descent of the Quranic verses and thereby understand the Islamic injunctions which we should obey and call on others to act upon?

As we are bound to act upon the injunctions of Islam, we must first obtain a knowledge about them, since action is not possible without knowledge.

It can be stated with complete confidence that the effort for

Islamic solidarity, and steadfastness in bringing back Islam to the Muslim society, are not incompatible with the discussion and investigation of the history of Islam and a careful survey of the traditions of its Prophet. On the contrary, it serves as its basis and both subjects serve as complements to one another, for, bringing Islam back to the Muslim society would not be possible without creating harmony among the Muslims, and understanding the meaning of the Quranic verses and the Prophet's utterances as well as history of Islam.

Similarly, so long as there exists no faith in the necessity of bringing Islam back to the Muslim society, no friendship and proper brotherhood will be established among the Muslims, since if this were not so, what would be the basis of harmony among the Muslims? What would give them unity and the common direction? Moreover, creation of brotherhood is not possible except through making the Muslims understand each other's views, and take to proper criticism in order to discover and follow the truth. In that case, these words of God in the Qur'an would be applicable to them:

"Give good news to those who listen to the word, then follow the best of it; those are they whom Allah has guided and those it is who are the men of understanding." (17)

This is our call and we beg God to enable us and all our Muslim brethren to follow these noble words. The difficulties mentioned above have been peculiar to the Muslims.

Worship of ancestors

In the history of Islam, like the history of other nations and religions of the world, in addition to what we have already mentioned, there have always been three other great obstacles which have acted as barriers to many seekers of truth and historians, checking them from following truth and knowledge.

The first and the foremost difficulty have been the habit of excessive respect for and even worship of ancestors. Since history was written, man has always been accustomed to show unnecessary and undue reverence to those who have gone by. This led to idolatry, and thus Nasr, Yaghuth Wadd, Ya'uq and Suwa',(18) who were good and virtuous men were respected greatly by their contemporaries, but after their death, this

respect took the form of worship.

Surprisingly, we see our good people of the past who, in various periods of their lives, go so far in their rejection and criticism that they issue verdicts of death for each other and consider legitimate shedding the blood of their rivals and followers. But after the passage of long years, the present generation has gone to this in its reverence and respect for them that they do not even allow any survey and investigation of their words and deeds to themselves and to others, thus preventing discovery of truth altogether.

Blind prejudice

The second barrier is improper, indecent and, at the same time, comic prejudice, which serves as a barrier keeping man, confined within the wall of darkness and ignorance. This is an altar of sacrifice where we have witnessed many victims throughout human history in every country and every period.

Religious fanaticism twice turned the city of Rayy into ruins at the beginning of the seventh century AH.(19) The Hanafites and Shafi'ites rose first against the Shi'ites and cruelly massacred them. Then the Shafi'ites attacked the Hanafi sect and shed their blood, with the result that houses were demolished and the city was destroyed. This is an example of the altar of sacrifice due to fanaticism. We can easily find thousands of victims in history as a result of ugly, ill-omened, touching and funny prejudice.

Demagogues

The third obstacle is the most hateful of them, namely the influence exerted by those in power in various periods of history. It was they who by using bayonets and their position did whatever they desired, and forcefully and by means of demagogy and affectation blocked the way of discussion and investigation, and since the year 655 formally barred the nation's jurisprudence from practicing jurisprudence. (20)

I do not know whether now that after eight centuries preliminary steps have been taken to prove the way of practicing jurisprudence, and some progress has been made in this respect, the time has not come to permit the Muslims to

resort to discussion and investigation, too, or whether they would do nothing but imitate their predecessors.

No! the situation would not continue to remain so, since owing to the constant efforts of reformers, the light of knowledge has made truth evident to an undeniable extent, and the time will arrive very soon when people will laugh at our suffering for not being allowed any discussion and investigation, in the same way that we are now laughing at the indecent obstinacy and fanaticism of the people of Rayy in that period.

Beside these obstacles, on hearing the praise of someone we have got into the habit of closing our ears to a criticism of him, or when we resort to fault-finding and criticism, we cannot afford to hear a praise of him.

But I will introduce ‘A’ishah Umm al-Mu’minin on the basis of what I have found in traditions and history, whether this introduction takes the form of criticism or praise. If someone is not content with this description and cannot bear the difficulties already mentioned (which are mutually felt by both the writer and reader), then he can hand over the book to another person who is able to remove those obstacles out of this way.

Indeed, anyone who wishes to recognize Umm al-Mu’minin through history and traditions and analyze her personality so far as it is possible through the study of traditions, the following pages which describe various periods of this lady of early Islam are at his disposal. It is worthier to follow truth. May the right spirit be blessed!

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Baghdad, College of Theology

Part One
'A'ishah in the Prophet's household

Chapter al-Ahzab of the Qur'an

Verses 28 to 33:

"O Prophet! Say your wives: If you desire this worlds life and its nature, then come, I will give you a provision and allow you to depart a goodly departing;

And if you desire Allah and His Apostle and the latter abode, then surely Allah has prepared for the doers of good among you a mighty reward.

O wives of the Prophet! Whoever of you commits an open indecency, the punishment shall be increased to her doubly; and this is easy to Allah.

And whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Apostle and does good, We will give to her reward doubly, and We have prepared for her an honorable sustenance.

O wives of the Prophet! You are not like any other of the women; if you will be on your guard, then be not soft in your speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease yearn; and speak a good word.

And stay in your houses and do not display your finery like the displaying of the ignorance of yore."

A glance at ‘A’ishah’s life

‘A’ishah had a nervous, sharp and unruly Tempe.

The author

‘A’ishah was the daughter of the first caliph ‘Abd Allah Abu Bakr, son of Abu Quhafah ‘Uthman, and granddaughter of ‘Amir ibn Ka’b of the house of Taym (Quraysh).

She was born in the fourth year after the Prophet’s ordainment in Mecca and grew up in the same city.

After the death of his first loyal wife, Khadjjah, and two years before his emigration to Medina, the Prophet wedded ‘A’ishah, and a year and a half after the emigration, in the lunar month of Shawwal and after the battle of Badr, on the insistence of her father Abu Bakr, took her to his own house. When the Prophet died, she was only eighteen years old. Thus Umm al-Mu’minin spent only eight years and five months of her life in the Prophet’s house.

After the departure of the Prophet, ‘A’ishah was a staunch supporter of the government of the time in the caliphate of her father Abu Bakr, and after him, in the rule of his sincere friend, ‘Umar, and evens in the first half of ‘Uthman’s caliphate.

In the second half of ‘Uthman’s caliphate, for certain reasons which will be explained later ‘A’ishah got offended with ‘Uthman, and this vexation gradually changed into rancor and hostility owing to certain incidents which occurred between her and ‘Uthman. As a result of the sharp acts of ‘Umm al-Mu’minin and violent reactions of ‘Uthman this hostility went so far that despite all her support of the caliphs and caliphate, she joined the ranks of ‘Uthman’s opponents, and even acted as their leader, opposing ‘Uthman to such an extent that she fanned up the flame of public uprising and revolution until ‘Uthman was assassinated.

With the death of ‘Uthman, and people’s allegiance to Imam ‘ali ibn Abi Talib as caliph, ‘A’ishah saw that her plan was ruined [21] and so she raised the banner of opposition to the Imam, and roused his rivals and opponents to wage the battle of al-Jamal [22] in Basra against him and herself commanded the

opponents' forces in this fight.

'A'ishah was defeated in the battle of al-Jamal and her forces were badly crushed, but Imam 'Ali brought her back respectfully to Medina, where she continued to stay until the assassination of Imam 'Ali.

When Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sufyan seized power, he resorted to fabricating and publishing false traditions through his supporters and hirelings, describing the merits and virtues of his own house in particular, and those of 'A'ishah's group and supporters and Imam 'Ali's opponents in general. In the propagation of these praises and eulogies, 'A'ishah herself played an important role which will be described later.

'A'ishah died on the night of Tuesday 10th of Shawwal, 57 or 59 AH, in Medina and Abu Hurayrah, successor to Marwan ibn al-Hakam, who was Governor of Medina, performed her funeral prayers,(23) and according to her, will she was buried in the al-Baaq' alongside the graves of other wives of the Prophet(24). 'A'ishah had a nervous, sharp and unruly temper. A forceful nature, quickness of understanding the position and taking decision, sharp intelligence, envy and intense jealousy, too, were elements of her personality. She was extremely jealous of her he husband, and this jealousy was so intense that she could not allow anyone else to find a place in his heart, or let the smallest particle of his affection be given to another person whoever he or she may have been.

'A'ishah deeply loved her kith and kin, and was so prejudiced in their favour that she lost her head whenever their interests were endangered, and thus she forgot her position and, by no means, abstained from supporting their interests.

All these were her moral qualities, which held away during her whole life, especially the short years of her married life with the Prophet. Lastly 'A'ishah is one of those everlasting women whose name will be remembered in history until the end of the world.

The secret behind the plurality of the Prophet's wives
Why did the Prophet have several wives?

A discussion of nation's customs

Every nation's customs are produced by its environment from the viewpoint of geography, economics, education, ideas and beliefs, taking shape in a succession of eras and centuries, and finding firm and strong roots in the texture of that nation. That is why it is a very difficult matter for a scholar to discuss and survey the customs of a people who possess a history in accordance with their position; for, one cannot look upon the way of life and moral and spiritual characteristics, customs and habits of a nation from the viewpoint of the present day society, or at' our customs and social and economic environment as well as our means of communication, education and association of various nations, and draw a conclusion and pass a judgment. Today we live in relatively large cities, stay in rather comfortable houses, and benefit from all the facilities provided by modern architecture for an easy life as well as parks, well-equipped stores, fast transport, different means of communications such as telephone, microwave etc. So that when some famous figure, for instance, sneezes at the other end of the world, every one at this end hears and sees it in less than a second. Customs and habits conform with such an environment.

With this very brief and concise introduction, how can we, in view of the vision and understanding of our society, pass judgment to reach a conclusion about the habits, customs and traditions that existed fourteen centuries ago?

What do we know of the tribal life in forts, under tents and in deserts within the framework of tribal customs and traditions? Even if we know something, will this knowledge be enough to enable us to feel at home amidst that tribe and within the bounds of its customs and traditions? Can we, like them, view matters from the same angle of that time and place, and the same habits and customs of several centuries ago of tribal upbringing and pass a judgement?

We never claim our ability to lead you, on this tour and exploration, in every possible way, or place at your disposal all the social customs and circumstances of various tribes of Arabia in a perfectly clear and tangible manner related to fourteen centuries ago, to the extent that you may feel to be one of them. What we can do is to try to describe the circumstances of that environment to the extent of acquainting you with the historical facts of that land.

Certain facts of history

All historians in the world, both friendly and hostile, are unanimous in the following points:

1-The people of Arabia before advent of Islam, owing to the unfavorable nature of the environment, lived mostly in tents and consequently the means of their livelihood were obtained, not through agriculture or in some cases, not through animal husbandry, but through plunder of each other or massacre of other tribes, so that they could provide themselves with sustenance for a few days and rescue themselves from hunger.

2-With the exception of Yemen and ash-Sham, and several small and insignificant oases in the parched deserts of Arabia, and a few villages and small towns (if they could be called so) the biggest and the most populous of which were Mecca and Yathrib, no sign of development and civilization could be seen in that scorched land.

3-Wealth and property were monopolized by the idolatrous feudals of Mecca and chiefs of the Quraysh tribe, and perhaps the Jews of Yathrib and other neighboring oases. Other inhabitants of that dry land had nothing but hot sighs which rose from their bare breasts on account of such an intense poverty and distress, and no smoke emitted from their hearths. Also no water boiled in their pots, and it was only their tears of despair, which flowed down their lackluster eyes.

4-Lack of harmony of environment and tent-dwelling the scourge of scorching seasonal winds of the dry and burning desert, bloodshed, massacre and plunder for making sustenance even for a few days; poverty and indigence, hard life, savagery and thousands of other miseries had deprived most of those poor and unhappy people of tender and fine human feelings to

such an extent that they buried alive their unfortunate daughters with their own hands in order to get rid of any additional burden at their paltry and miserable meal, and check themselves from offering that unhappy, broken and poor community of Hejaz another creature who would be more unfortunate than themselves.

The Qur'an says in chapter al-An'am, verse 151:

"Say: (0 Prophet!) Come, I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you. Remember that you do not associate anything with Him, and show kindness to your parents, and do not slay your children for fear of poverty."

And in Chapter al-Isra' (Banu Isra'il), verse 31, it says:

"And do not kill your children for fear of poverty; we give them sustenance and yourselves too; surely to kill them is a great wrong."

And in Chapter at-Takwir, verses 8 and 9 it says:

"And when the one buried alive is asked ('on Resurrection Day), for what sin was she killed?"

They were afraid for the following reasons:

1-In fights, retreats, massacres and plunders, girls not only were a hindrance, but owing to poverty and indigence they were also likely to be driven to disgraceful deeds and debauchery, thus ruining the honour of the family.

2-Owing' to their physical peculiarities, in defeats and retreats, women and girls were often taken prisoner by the enemy and sold as slaves.

3-In the family and tribe, girls had the role of consumers and were an economic burden on the family, and could thus usurp the place of active and efficient men and boys of the family and tribe.

Chapter an-Nahl of the Qur'an, verses 58 and 59 say:

"And when a daughter is announced to one of them his fare becomes black and he is full of wrath.

He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it alive in the dust?"

It is clear as to what the life of such girls who remained alive would be. Moreover, in the society of Arabia of those days, a woman had no position at all. She was regarded by men as a

means of quenching their lust, and sometimes she was inherited by the eldest son who as her sole owner could offer her to anyone he wished or arranged her marriage to him. He could force his slave-girls to sell their bodies and offer the money thus gained to their owner, or to throw themselves into the arms of any men of their master's choice. She could be deprived of all inheritance, and be rated as a captive, a slave, an outcast, a hated being, a wicked element lacking all worth and asset, a troublesome creature and a burden to society. She had no right to her own belongings, and was even deprived of living in the way she desired.

God Almighty says in Chapter an-Nur of the Qur'an, verse 33:

"And do not compel your slave-girls to prostitution, when they desire to keep chaste, in order to seek frail good of this world's life, and whoever compels them, then surely after their compulsion Allah is Forgiving, Merciful"

This was how the pre-Islamic Arabs treated their women, and when we speak of Arab women, we are referring to the land of Hejaz. But in those days in no nation or religion were women considered to be free-born human beings. Let us lay aside futile prejudice, and turn the pages of history books of various nations and religions to see that our claim is supported fully, and then realize that it is only Islam that completely respects the rights of women as free-born human beings.(25)

In view of the regrettable state of the Arabs' life in those days, the position a woman held in such a society, and the problems caused by her in every family and tribe, let us now turn to the study of the attitude of Islam towards women as a result of the noble Prophet's wise treatment of this divine creature who has been created by God as man's partner and companion and given the task of bringing stability and tranquility into human life.

Economic combat of Quraysh with the Prophet

In the days when the Prophet was newly ordained, the Quraysh rose up to check the propagation and spread of this new religion, and tried to find the means of vanquishing him through the exigencies of those times. They proposed to his

sons-in-law to divorce his daughters and send them back to their father's house in order to deter the Prophet from engaging in spirittual and religious mission of prophethood, and thus compelling him to attend to material duties of providing livelihood for his family.

This story has been mentioned in "Sirah of Ibn Hisham": The Quraysh said to each other: "You have freed Muhammad from the worry of supporting his family, send back his daughters to him to keep him occupied with the task of getting subsistence for them." Then to carry out their plan, they got in touch with the Prophet's sons-in-law, namely Abu al-'As the nephew of Khadijah, and 'Utbah, son of Abu Lahab who was the Prophet's nephew [26], and proposed to them that, in return for divorcing Muhammad's daughter, they would let them marry any of the girls of the Quraysh (who were the nobles of Mecca) that they desired. Abu al-'As, who felt a deep affection for his wife (daughter of the Prophet), refused the proposal, but 'Utbah answered that he would agree on the condition that they let him marry the daughter of Sa'id ibn al-'As or his granddaughter, that is, daughter of Aban ibn Sa'id ibn al-'As The Quraysh fulfilled his wish and jet him marry the daughter of Sa'id ibn al -'As and thus he divorced Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet.

In view of this historical happening, it can easily be seen to what extent a woman was burden for a man of family, so that the Quraysh adopted this method as the most decisive way of fighting the Prophet.

Economic support for the Prophet and winning over the enemy

On the one hand, at a time when the hostility of the Quraysh with the Prophet and his friends reached its height, some of his friends, both men and women, on his advice, departed for Abyssinia and then emigrated to Medina, thus abandoning all their property and belonging for the consent of God. They only succeeded in saving their lives from the Quraysh, and eventually the Prophet himself joined them in Medina and chose that city as the center of his activities.

Some of these homeless people were so indigent that they did not even have any clothes, and the Prophet let them settle on a

roofed platform in the mosque of Medina for days and nights, and that is why they were given the name of Ashab as-suffah (companions of the platform).

Among these wanderers there were guardian-less widows and lonely girls whom the honour of Islam could not allow to stay on that platform with the men, or permit them to stay in the houses of Ansar (those who helped the Prophet) without any logical and legitimate reason.

On the other hand, with the occurrence of battles and death of Muslim fighters in the field, the number of unprotected women and girls regularly increased. But on the recommendation of the Prophet, these females did not remain without a guardian; and by being made the legal consort of the Prophet, they shared the life of his other companions, and could enter their houses and prevents shattering of life.

Marriage as a means of preventing conflict and bloodshed

There had been long-standing customs in various Arab tribes, some of which still prevail. For instance, if a combat occurred between two tribes or blood was shed, the best way to prevent further bloodshed and loss of life and plunder, was to arrange inter-marriage between the two hostile groups, so that with the creation of this kinship, massacre and plunder would be stopped, and also loyal allies acquiesce to fight other enemies.

Now let us return to the main subject and continue the topic on exploring the reason for the plurality of the Prophet's wives.

1-Khadjjah, daughter of Khuwaylad al-Asadjyah al-Qurayshjyah

Khadjjah was the first lady to become the consort of the Prophet, and also the first woman to embrace this faith. She had married twice before him and had some children by them. Her marriage with the Prophet took place fifteen years before his ordainment when she was forty years of age, while the Prophet was twenty-five.

Khadijah died in the tenth year after ordainment when she was sixty-five. She was the only wife of the Prophet for twenty five years, and during this period, she spared no effort in

offering her wealth and devotion to him to promote the divine mission of her husband.

The Prophet's children, with the exception of Ibrahim, came from Khadjjah, and so long as she lived, he did not marry another, and to the end of his life, he remembered Khadjjah as the first lady of Islam. With the abundant alms she offered, he kept alive and respected her memory. The year Khadjjah died, the Prophet had gone through fiftieth year of his very active life.

2-Sudah, daughter of Zam'ah

At first, Sudah had married her cousin, as-Sakran, and accompanied the second group of Muslim emigrants to Abyssinia. as-Sakran died after his return from Abyssinia in Mecca and left Sudah without a guardian. After the death of Khadijah, the Prophet married Sudah who was then of an advanced age and had no one to take care of her. She died at the time of caliphate of Mu'awiyah in Medina in the year 54 AH.

3-'A'ishah, daughter of Abu Bakr

The Prophet proposed marriage with 'A'ishah in the same year as with Sudah, but he took the former to his house in Medina after the battle of Badr upon the insistence of her father, Abu Bakr.

4-Hafsah daughter of 'Umar

Hafsah, daughter of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, was born five years before the ordainment of the Prophet of Islam. At first she wedded Khunays, son of Hudhafah, and immigrated with him to Medina. In the battle of Badr, he died after being wounded, leaving Hafsah a widow. Her father, 'Umar, was looking for a husband for her among the Prophet's friends, and at first made a proposal to 'Uthman who was rich and of the Umayyads, and though his wife Ruqayyah who was the Prophet's daughter, had died 'Uthman did not agree to this proposal of marriage and gave a negative answer. 'Umar asked Abu Bakr to marry Hafsah, but Abu Bakr, too, refused. So 'Umar who was offended with the refusal of two distinguished friends of the Prophet, complained to the Prophet against them,

and the Prophet settled the matter by himself marrying Hafsah. Hafsah died in the lunar month of Sha'ban in the year 45 AH in the caliphate of Mu'awiyah. Marwan governor of Medina, performed her burial prayer, and she was buried in al-Baqi'.[27]

5-Zaynab, daughter of Khuzaymah

Zaynab had married twice before being wedded to the Prophet. Her second husband was killed in the battle of Uhud. The Prophet proposed to marry her, and she left the decision to himself. The Prophet married her in the lunar month of Ramadan in the third year after Hijrah. Zaynab died eight months after this marriage in the lunar month of Rabi' alAwwal (Rabi' I) in the fourth year after Hijrah.[28]

6-Unim Salamah, daughter of Abu Umayyah

Her name was Hind, and she was the daughter of Abu Umayyah al-Makhzumi, and her mother was 'Atikah, daughter of 'Amir al-Makhzumi. At first she was the wife of Abu Salamah 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abd ai-Asad al-Makhzumi both of whom embraced Islam in Mecca. When the misconduct of the Quraysh towards the Muslims in Mecca became intolerable, the Prophet ordered them to emigrate to Abyssinia, where Umm Salamah gave birth to her children. Then the family returned to Mecca, and when the Prophet emigrated to Medina, Abu Salamah mounted his wife and a child on a camel, took the halter and proceeded towards Medina.

Umm Salamah narrates the story as follows: "When my relatives realized our intention to depart, they said to Abu Salamah: 'You yourself fled from us to become a Muslim. But we swear to God that we will not let you carry 'a woman of our family from one city to another,' and they pulled the halter out of his hand. When the relatives of Abu Salamah saw this, they protested angrily to them, and said: 'If you separate Umm al Salamah from her husband, we will not let you take her child with you since he is our child.' In this dispute the child's arm was dislocated, but finally Abu Salamah took away the child with him and my relatives kept me with them, and Abu Salamah departed for Medina."

She then adds: "They separated me from my husband. Every

day I went to the valley of al-Abtah in Mecca, and sat there weeping till evening. This went on for seven days until one of my cousins, while passing by, saw me. He went to our relatives asking them why they did not leave the poor woman alone and why they separated her from her husband. This protest had a positive effect, and they told me I could join my husband if I wished. When the relatives of my husband saw this, they brought back my child to me. I took him in my arms, mounted a camel and proceeded towards Medina, without any companion until I reached the land of at-Tan'im. 'Uthman, son of Talhah 'Abd ad-Dan al-Qurayshi, saw me and shouted: 'O daughter of Umayyah, where are you going to?' I said. 'I am going to my husband in Medina.' He asked: 'Is anyone accompanying you?' I said: 'No, by God, except God and this son of mine.' He said: 'By God, It cannot let you go alone.' Then he took the camel's halter and walked ahead. I swear to God I have never seen a man more chivalrous than him on this journey. Whenever we reached a halting place, he caused the camel to kneel down, and himself stayed some distance away to rest under a tree, and when it was time to move, he came and tied the saddle on the camel's back and stood aside telling me to mount. After I did so, he took the halter and pulled the camel behind him. This continued till we came close to Medina. He showed me the village of Quba' and said: 'This is where your husband is staying.' Then he went away and I joined my husband there."

When Umm Salamah reached Medina, it was said that she was the first lady to emigrate to Medina. The family stayed there until the battle of Uhud took place. Abu Salamah joined the Prophet to participate in that battle when he was wounded and eventually succumbed to the same wound in Medina and Umm Salamah was left without a guardian. The Prophet married Umm Salamah who was now old and sterile, and thus he took her and her children under his protection and support.

Umm Salamah died during the caliphate of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah and after the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn.(29)

7-Juwayriyah, daughter of al-Harith

The story of the marriage of the Prophet with Juwayriyah is a long one, but briefly speaking al-Harith was the chief of the

tribe of Banu al-Mustalaq that lived about thirty kilometers away from Medina. It was in the fifth or sixth year after Hijrah that al-Harith, with the aid of other tribes, collected a large force intending to carry out a surprise ride upon Medina and annihilate the Muslims.

The Prophet, who was aware of this plan, sent one of his companions to keep a watch on the tribe of al-Harith in order to find out the position and number of the enemy and report it. His envoy carried out the mission successfully and brought the Prophet useful information about the enemy's military position.

Meanwhile, a spy too came from the army of al-Harith among the Muslims to collect information, but he was captured before he could render any service. The Muslims invited him to embrace Islam but he refused, and thus they were forced to kill him. After this incident, the Prophet made the first move and attacked the tribe of Banu al-Mustalaq.

When the men from other tribes in the army of al-Harith saw themselves confronted with an unexpected attack, they fled and left al-Harith's army alone to engage in battle. The crier of Islam proposed the acceptance of this faith to al-Harith's troops but they did not only refuse the invitation but also killed the crier with arrows.

When the Muslims saw this, they rushed at once upon the enemy and in a hard battle, which ensued, the tribe of al-Harith surrendered after defeat. Of the Muslim army only one soldier was killed, while al-Harith's army lost ten men. The Muslims captured much spoil and many men as prisoners. Juwayriyah whose husband had been killed in this battle, was one of the captives, and she was given to one of the Ansar (Prophet's helpers) as his share.

When they returned to Medina, she went to the Prophet begging him for freedom. The Prophet said the ransom, freed and then married her. When the Prophet's companions heard this news, as a sign of respect to this marriage, they set free all the captives in their possession.

al-Harith, on hearing this report came to Medina and embraced Islam, and on his return to his tribe, made them all embrace Islam.

8-Umm Habibah, daughter of Abu Sufyan

Umm Habibah's father Abu Sufyan was the archenemy of the Prophet of Islam and instigator and ringleader of the Quraysh battles against the Prophet. Unlike her father, Umm Habibah embraced Islam and emigrated to Abyssinia with her husband and he died there, leaving her without a caretaker. When the Prophet heard of this he sent someone to her in Abyssinia, asking her hand in marriage and eventually he married her in the seventh year after Hijrah.

The news of his daughter's marriage with the Prophet deeply enraged Abu Sufyan who was enemy of God and His prophet, and uttered such words which showed his defeat in the face of the greatness and exalted moral and spiritual position of the Prophet. He said: "One cannot punch this male in the nose."[(30)]

One year after this marriage, the peace treaty of al-Hudaybiyah took place in the 8th year AH and the Quraysh, despite all of their obstinacy, were vanquished by the greatness and power of Islam, thus actually and formally recognizing this divine faith.

Do you suppose this marriage has been devoid of effect in securing such a great advantage?

9-Safiyah, daughter of Huyay

Safiyah was the daughter of Huyay ibn Akhtab from the progeny of Aaron, brother of Moses, and her mother wasBarrah, daughter of Samuel, from the Banu Qurayzah tribe.

Her first husband was Salam, son of Mushkim, and after being divorced, she was wedded to Kinanah, son of ar-Rabi' from Banu an-Nadir tribe. But ar-Rabi' was killed by the Muslims in the battle of Khaybar, and the infidels in Khaybar were taken captive by the Muslims after the battle. The Prophet took her to himself as a war prisoner and when he noticed a blue mark on he face he asked how it had come about. She answered: "One night I dreamt that a moon rose from Medina and settled on my lap. I related my dream to my husband, Rabi', and he felt very uneasy and shouted at me: 'Do you hope to become a king's consort who has risen in Medina?' and he slapped me so hard on the face that it went blue, and this is the effect of that blow."

After hearing the story, the Prophet said to Safiyah: "If you embrace Islam, I will marry you, and if you remain a Jew, I will set you free to return to your people and tribe."

She said: "Prior to invitation to Islam, I had already embraced it. Moreover, I have no parents and have nothing to do with the Jews for you to give me the choice between faith and infidelity. God and His prophet are much more important to me than freedom and return to my kins."

The Prophet told her to observe the period of waiting related to her husband's death, and then wedded her and settled her in the al-'Aliyah locality of Medina in the house of one of the members of Banu Harithah tribe.

'A'ishah while veiled, secretly visited Safiyah. The Prophet asked her: "How did you find Safiyah?" She answered: "I found her a Jewess." He said: "Don't call her a Jewess since she has embraced Islam and is a good Muslim."

Safiyah loved the Prophet deeply and did not abstain from expressing affection. One example of this love emerged when the Prophet had fallen ill and his consorts had gathered around him, Safiyah said anxiously to the Prophet: "I swear to God that I long to have your pain transferred to my body." On hearing the words of Safiyah, other wives of the Prophet winked at each other and, raised their eyebrows, considering her words to be ostentatious. But this unfair conduct of the ladies was duly observed by the Prophet. So he addressed them, saying: "Go and cleanse yourself of wrong thoughts." They asked the reason, and he said: 'Your gestures and hints. I swear to God that she is truthful sincere in her words."

Safiyah died in the year 52 AH in Medina during the caliphate of Mu'awiyah and was buried in al-Baqi' cemetery.(31)

10-Maymunah, daughter of al-Harith

Maymunah, daughter of al-Harith al-Hilaliyah, was at first the wife of Mas'ud ath-Thaqafi, and after being divorced she married Abu Rahm ibn 'Abd al-'Uzza and lived with him until his death. In the year 7 AH when the Prophet was on a pilgrimage to Mecca, she wedded him. The sermon was read by his son-in-law Abbas (husband of his sister) and the Prophet's uncle. She accompanied him to Medina.

Maymunah was the last lady to marry the Prophet. There is no agreement about the date of her death, but the most accepted view is that she died in the year 51 AH on her return from pilgrimage at a halting place called Sarf.

11-Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh

The stories of the Prophet's marriages were so far similar to each other, having a clear reason. But there was another reason for his marriage with Zaynab, which requires an introduction.

As we know, reformers in the world usually took the first step themselves in carrying out their plan of reform for society, and began with themselves and their family. They spared no effort and self-sacrifice necessary for attaining their sacred goal and then went on to invite their kith and kin, and afterwards other human beings to act upon the plan.

The Prophet of Islam, as a unique reformer of humanity, was no exception to this law, and he began with himself to reform society and do away with the hated customs of pagan times upon the order of God. For this reason in his last Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca he said: "Usury of any type is null and void, and the first usury I abolish is the usury of my uncle al-'Abbas.[32] Every blood that is shed in pagan times is lost, and the first blood I waste is the blood of Rabi'ah son grandson of 'Abd al-Muttalib."[33]

In the biography of the Prophet, there is much evidence about this episode. His marriage with Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh is one of those cases where the Prophet sought it to break up the system of ignorance and ugly customs of pagan times.

The Prophet by this marriage pursued the following two fundamental objectives:

1-To remove class distinction.

2-To abolish the verdicts related to adopt sons.[34]

Zayd ibn Harithah, the Prophet's adopted son, was in his childhood attacked by a group of Arabs and kidnapped, and then put up for sale in Mecca. The Prophet was present at the sale, and upon feeling an attachment for him bought him for his wife, Khadijah, and she offered the child to the Prophet.

Zayd's parents, who were afflicted at the disappearance of

their endeared child, knew nothing of his fate. One day some members of Zayd's tribe happened to see him in Mecca and they recognized each other, and Zayd sent a poem through them for his parents, saying: "Be not worried. I live in the family of the noblest of Arab tribes and I am well-looked after."

Zayd's father and uncle who were informed of his situation and residence took some money with them and left for Mecca, hoping to buy him back. When they met the Prophet and explained their purpose, he said: "If Zayd wishes to leave me, I have no objection." He summoned Zayd, and when he saw his father and uncle, he admitted his kinship. Then the Prophet explained to him their purpose and gave him the option to stay or to leave. Zayd answered: "I shall never prefer anyone to you." His father said: "My boy, do you prefer slavery to the freedom of living with your father?" He answered, pointing to the Prophet:
'Yes, with such a person.

Then the Prophet took Zayd's hand and brought him to the rock of Isma'il (in the Ka'bah) and said in a loud voice: "Be witness that Zayd is my son; he inherits from me and I inherit from him."

When Zayd's father and uncle heard this, they were overjoyed and returned home. After Zayd's freedom, the people called him "Zayd ibn Muhammad ibn 'Abd Allah."

Zaynab, daughter of Jahsh, who was a niece of the Prophet, was his ward, and a marriage proposal far her came from some of the Quraysh tribe. She asked the Prophet what to do. He proposed her marriage with Zayd. Zaynab protested and said:
"Would you give me, your niece, to a freed slave of yours?" Zaynab's brother and sister did not approve of this marriage either, on account of the existing class difference until a divine revelation descended about this matter, saying:

"And it behoves not a believing man and a believing woman that they should have any choice in their matter when Allah and His Apostle have decided a matter; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Apostle, he surely strays off a manifest straying."([35])

This verse silenced all three of them and they expressed their agreement, with Zaynab declaring her readiness to marry Zayd. The Prophet solemnized the ceremony with the same lofty goal of removing class differences and aristocratic pride.

Zaynab went to Zayd’s house and lived along with the other wife of Zayd, called Umm Ayman, who had also been freed by the Prophet, and with her child Usamah. Such a life made Zaynab uneasy and she began to maltreat Zayd. This misbehavior continued until Zayd complained of her to the Prophet and asked his permission to divorce her. But the Prophet said:

‘Keep your wife to yourself and be careful of your duty to Allah”[36]

However, her misconduct made Zayd so weary that upon his insistence, the Prophet agreed to their separation and she was eventually divorced.

When her legal period of separation was over, the Prophet was ordered by God to break another custom of pagan times by marrying Zaynab, so as to show that the laws related to one’s own son do not apply to an adopted son, and one can marry the divorced wife of one’s adopted son.

It was hard for the Prophet to carry out this matter, and he was worried about the people’s attitude and their idle talk, until the following verse descended showing his intense anxiety:

“Do you fear people, while it is worthier for you to fear God? Now that Zayd has freed that woman, We allow you to wed her so that believers would not be blamed for marrying the divorced wives of their adopted sons.”[37]

On the basis of this verse and its explicit comment the Prophet married Zaynab to break by divine order, the despised and illogical customs of pagan times.

What has been said shows that most of the Prophet’s marriages were based on the advisability, policy and interest of the society, execution of divine laws, as well as breaking the wrong customs of pagan times, not for the sake of satisfying carnal desires or animal instincts.

The ladies who offered themselves to the Prophet without a dowry

There were other women who offered themselves to the Prophet without demanding a dowry. What is meant by the word “offer” according to the Qur’an is proposal of marriage. Books of biography and history mention several such women, one of

whom is Khulah, daughter of Hakim.

12-Khulah, daughter of Hakim a1-Hilaliyah

She was a woman who proposed marriage to the Prophet, but he postponed giving an answer. She served in his house until the Prophet wedded her to 'Uthman ibn Maz'un and she lived in the latter's house till his death.(38)

13-Another lady

Sahl ibn Sa'd narrates: A woman came to the Prophet and offered herself in marriage. The Prophet remained silent. A Muslim man, who was present, said: "0 Prophet! If you have no need of this woman, wed her to me." The Prophet said: "What have you to give her as dowry?" He answered: "Only the shirt I am wearing." The Prophet said: "If you give it to her, you will go naked. Try to find something else." He said: "I have nothing." The Prophet said: "Not an iron ring?" He said: "Not even that." The Prophet said: "Do you remember any verses of the Qur'an?" He said "yes" and recited several of them. The Prophet said:

"Then I; offer you this woman in marriage, her dowry being those very verses of the Qur'an."

In the Prophet's biography there are mentioned the names of several other ladies who proposed marriage to the Prophet such as Umm Shank and Umm Layla. Some of them had spent a heart-rending life in the way of Islam before going to the Prophet, but it is explicitly stated that the Prophet married none of them.(39)

A special verdict for a particular person

We have already spoken of the distress and homelessness of Muslim women of that time in the city of Medina, and saw how necessary it was in the sublime interests of Islam for the Prophet to get married with women of some unruly Arab tribes. As every Muslim is allowed to take four wives, we see that an exception was made in the case of the Prophet.

This exception is mentioned in verses 50-52 of Chapter al Ahzab as follows:

"O Prophet! Surely We have made lawful to you your wives whom you have given their dowries, and those whom your right

hand possesses out of those of whom Allah has given to you as prisoners of war, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal uncles and the daughters of your maternal aunts who fled with you; and a behaving woman if she gave herself to the Prophet if the Prophet desired to marry her -specially for you, not for the rest of believers, We know what We have ordained for them concerning their wives, and those who in their right hand possess in order that no blame may attach to you; and Allah is Forgiving Merciful.

You may put off whom you please of them, and you may take to you whom you please, and whom you desire of those whom you had separated provisionally; no blame attaches to you; this is most proper; so that their eye may be cool and they may not grieve, and that they should be pleased, all of them, with what you have given them, and Allah knows what is in your hearts; and Allah is Knowing Forbearing.

It is not allowed to you to take women after wards, nor that you should change them for other wives, though their beauty be pleasing to you, except what your right hand possesses; and Allah is Watchful over all things."

These were God's commands given explicitly in the above verses, leaving it to the Prophet to take steps about what he thinks advisable. Thus, the number of his wives reached nine by the end of his life. This number was allowed only to the Prophet, while other men were allowed no more than four wives.

In the above verses, the limit of the Prophet's freedom is fixed at minus women's beauty, and this is a well-devised matter, and for this reason he is not allowed, unlike other men, to change by means of divorce any of his wives for new wives. The Prophet made use of this option for safeguarding the sublime interests of Islam and spiritual and political leadership in order to meet the human needs of the society's honorable women.

But when after the capture of Mecca the Muslims found a sound position, the Prophet did not marry again since he had no further need of the above verdict.

Conclusion of the survey
It is clear now concerning the Prophet's marriages that he lives with a lady who was fifteen years his senior, down to the age of fifty which is the height of a man's natural growth; a lady who died at the age of 65, and during that period he married no one else, and after Khadijah he married another woman advanced in years. Such was the Prophet's married life in Mecca until he emigrated to Medina and took charge of the grave responsibility of managing the Muslim society. At that time, the number of indigent and exiled believers who came to him every day reached eighty. They settled on the platform of the Prophet's mosque and some of them were inadequately dressed. At such a time, there were Muslim women who had lost their guardians in the battles of Muslims with infidels or in other happenings, and they could not return to their relatives since the latter were regarded as infidels and enemies of God and His prophet, and were thus looked upon as untouchables. All this happened in a community where women were anyhow regarded as a burden, and many fathers buried them alive for fear of falling short of subsistence for them. In the battles against the Prophet, too, they proposed to divorce his daughters in order to defeat him. The situation became so difficult in Medina for believing women that if a widow had a father, he insisted that one of his friends should marry her.

In such a case, was the Prophet's marriage with Hafsah not aimed at compensating her mental affliction and removal of her vexation with his two companions Abu Bakr and 'Uthman? At such a time, what could another old lady, Umm Salamah who had lost her husband in the battle of Uhud, do with so many children in a strange city? Could she possibly return to Mecca to the same family whose tyranny bad forced her to flee to Abyssinia in Africa?

Or how could the other lady, Zaynab daughter of Khuzaymah, who had already married twice before getting married ~to the Prophet and whose second husband was killed in the battle of Uhud, continue her life?

Similarly, what remedy was there but for the Prophet's protection for Umm Habibah daughter of Abu Sufyan, who due to molestation by her family was compelled to run away with

her husband to Abyssinia where she lost him? Umm Habibah is the daughter of the same Abu Sufyan who spared no crime for the annihilation of Islam and humbling the Prophet. He was the man behind all rebellions against the Prophet, who tried to preserve the honour of the same Abu Sufyan to an unimaginable degree. Indeed, if the Quraysh led by Abu Sufyan often had tried to send the Prophet’s daughters back to his house, the same Prophet wedded Abu Sufyan’s daughter in Abyssinia and brought her with all respect and dignity to Medina. He made her the wife of the noblest Arab, the grandson of ‘Abd al-Muttalib - an action which so overjoyed Abu Sufyan that he uttered his famous proverbial remark.

What reaction was produced in the other men of the Umayyad household by such noble acts? There is nothing at hand that could have quoted them but concerning the marriage with Juwayriyah, of the Banu al-Mustalaq tribe, we hear of an extensive reaction.

This tribe which was a branch of Khuza’ah tribes lived about thirty kilometers from Medina. Their chief al-Harith, gathered a large army of Arab tribes to fight the Prophet, but the Prophet made a surprise raid against him that led to the flight of other tribes who had come to help al-Harith. The Prophet proposed that they embrace Islam, but they refused. In the ensuing battle, al-Harith’s tribe was defeated, and its combatants surrendered. Among the prisoners was the daughter of al-Harith chief of the tribe. The Prophet bought her from the man who had taken her prisoner, and after freeing and marrying her, put her on an equal footing with the other ladies of his house, whereas he could use her as a slave-concubine. To show respect to the Prophet’s action, the Muslims freed all the prisoners of this tribe. When al-Harith heard of this matter, he came to Medina and embraced Islam, and then his whole tribe followed his example.

In the peace of al-Hudaybiyah this tribe and Khuza’ah tribe joined the Prophet against the Quraysh and their allies.

Now we can see the reason for the custom prevalent among the war-stricken Arab tribes. When they desired peace and reconciliation, the victorious tribe offered girls in marriage to the oppressed tribe, thus creating a political tie between them.

Obviously, the Prophet’s marriages with females from the defeated tribes were no exception to this rule, such as his marriage with Safiyah of the Khaybar Jews, and marrying Rayhanah of the Banu an-Nadir Jews with a Jew of the Banu Qurayzah.

The purpose of the Prophet was clear in such marriages: to join together unruly Arab tribes. And this point becomes more evident when we see that none of his marriages took place with his Ansar tribes, since the widows of this group lived with their families and had no need of financial support. It was the Ansar themselves who at the beginning of the Muslims’ emigration to Medina always helped such women with dwelling, food and clothes. The Prophet’s wisdom is evident in all his marriages. Only in two cases there is a need for inquiry. The marriage with ‘A’ishah is the first case, since he wedded her at the age of nine and thin is contrary to prevalent custom especially of the urban people. In answer to this, we have already said that it is not right to compare the custom of that time and place with one of our own time and place.

The Prophet was not the only person who married a girl of that age. He gave his own daughter Fatimah az-Zahra’ in marriage at the same age, and this is a prophet’s action from the viewpoint of Islamic law. Moreover, in hot regions, Human beings reach the stage of natural puberty sooner and also get old sooner. This is often seen in India today and many a time a girl reaches puberty and becomes pregnant even before the age of nine and also gets old and infirm sooner, whereas in the mountains of Tibet the reverse is true, to the extent that it is said a man may reach the age of two hundred there, and the age of one hundred is considered young for him.

The second case is the Prophet’s marriage with Zaynab, divorcee of Usamah, the adopted son of the Prophet, the reason for which has been explained by us earlier.

After these explanations about the reason for the plurality of the Prophet’s wives, there arises the question as to why there has come about a misapprehension and cynicism about his marriages. The answer is that our study of biographies and traditions shows that such pessimism and misunderstanding is due to the annals narrated about this issue from ‘A’ishah Umm

al-Mu'minin, in which the Prophet has been presented as a women-loving man, and this is the motive for writing this book.
In the next chapter, we will discuss some of these narrations.

'A'ishah in the Prophet's house

Woe upon her (A'ishah)! She is capable of every deed!

Uttered by the Prophet

Jealousy and Ardor

We have said that 'A'ishah was an ambitious and hot-tempered woman who was jealous of her husband's heart, and did not wish to see anyone win his affection.(40) An example of her intense jealousy and ardor can be seen in her conjugal life especially when the Prophet married another woman.

She speaks of this jealousy and mental uneasiness unreservedly when Umm Salamah, Zaynab and other ladies found their way into the Prophet's house, and she most openly expressed her violent ardor concerning futile thoughts especially about the nights when the Prophet left the house for his nightly devotions.

In dark nights when there prevailed deep silence and tranquility the Prophet was usually engaged in communion with his God, and thus he spent certain of the nights in privacy and devotion. As the Prophet spent each night turn by turn, in the house of one of his consorts, those acts of devotion compelled him to spend some hours of each night outdoors in the mosque or al-Baqi' Cemetery. Consequently, in the nights when he was to be with 'A'ishah, as soon as he left the house for his usual devotion, her womanly jealousy was so roused as to follow him and see where he went and what he did.

She herself gives an account of these nightly pursuits on various occasions.

Nightly pursuits

She says: "One night I noticed that he was not in his bed.
Uneasy thoughts so disturbed my mind as to fancy that he was

visiting another of his wives. So I got up to find Out where he had gone. Suddenly I found him prostrating in the mosque, praying: 'O God! Forgive me.' "[41]

Elsewhere she says: "One night I noticed the Prophet was not in his bed. I said to myself he must have gone to one of his other wives. I listened and then searched for him to find him in genuflection before God."[42]

She further says: "On another night he was not in bed, and I got up to locate him, and in that darkness I felt my way here and there when suddenly my hand touched the sole of his feet. He had prostrated himself praying."[43]

Elsewhere she says: "One night when he was scheduled to be in my house, he took off his cloak and put it aside. Then he removed his shoes and placed them near his bed Then he pulled one side of his garment over his face and lay down, remaining in that position for some time, so that I thought he had gone to sleep. Then he got up, put on his cloak and shoes quietly, opened the door, went out and quietly closed the door. I rose at once, got dressed, put on my veil and cloak and hurriedly left the house to follow him, and found him in the al-Baqj' cemetery. He stood there for a long time. Then he lifted his arms three times and left for home. I, too, returned. He made haste and so did I. He increased his pace and so did I. Then he began to run and so did I. At last I got home before him, and managed to throw myself on the bed and lie down. I was panting when he entered and he asked me: 'Why are you panting so hard 'A'ishah?' I said: 'It's nothing.' He said: 'Will you tell me yourself, or will Omniscient God inform me of it?' I told him what had taken place. Then he said: 'That dark figure I saw was you then?' I said 'Yes', and then he slapped me so hard on the back that it pained me. He said: 'Did you think that God and His prophet are unjust to you?' "[44]

She further notes: "One night the Prophet went out of my house. I felt very jealous and uneasy. When he came back and saw my discomfort, he asked the reason, saying: 'What has happened, 'A'ishah? Do you feel jealous and uneasy again?' I said: 'Why should a person like me not be jealous of a man like you?' He said: 'You are again captivated by your devil.' "[45]

She says also: "When some hours of the night passed, the

Prophet rose and went out. I thought he had gone to visit one of his other wives. I rose and followed him quietly, until he reached the cemetery. He stood there and addressing the believers, who had gone to eternal sleep there, said: 'Salutation to you, O group of believers!' He turned round suddenly and noticed me behind him, and said: 'Woe upon her! What would she not do if she could!' "(46)

'A'ishah and other wives of the Prophet

Encounters and reactions

'A'ishah's jealousy, womanly envy and hot temper have been observed in various ways, some examples of which are seen in her mental reaction in breaking the dishes and throwing away the food of other ladies of the Prophet, and in her behavior towards them. We will discuss these two points separately. At first we will describe her reaction to the dishes the other ladies prepared for the Prophet, and then deal with her violent encounters with his consorts.

1-Reactions

When I saw the slave-girl carrying the food, I trembled. So that I lost my head and seizing the dish, I threw it away.

'A'ishah

It sometimes happened that while the Prophet was in 'A'ishah's house, one of his other consorts prepared some food and sent it for him. On such occasions 'A'ishah lost self-control and showed her anger at this with a violent reaction. Here are some examples of these reactions:

'A'ishah and Umm Salamah's dish

One day when the Prophet was in 'A'ishah's house, Umm Salamah sent him a dish prepared by her. 'A'ishah who had been aware of such pleasing acts of Umm Salamah, arrived at that very moment dressed in her cloak and holding a stone in

her hand. She threw the stone at the dish and broke it. The Prophet observing this act, sent a dish of 'A'ishah back to Umm Salamah to compensate for the broken dish.[47]

'A'ishah and Hafsah's dish

'A'ishah says: "I had prepared some food for the Prophet when I learnt that Hafsah had done the same. I ordered my slave-girl to be on the alert and if Hafsah sent him a dish prior to mine, she (the slave-girl) should take it and throw it away. She did as she was told thus breaking Hafsah's plate, and throwing the food on the leather tablecloth. The Prophet gathered the remnants and said to me: 'Send one of your plates to Hafsah for the broken dish.' "[48]

'A'ishah and Safiyah's dish

We have already spoken of Safiyah earlier in this book, and now we hear 'A'ishah's account of breaking Safiyah's dish and throwing away the food. She says: "One day when the Prophet was in my house, Safiyah sent him a dish she had prepared. When I noticed the slave-girl is carrying the dish, I trembled, lost my head and seizing the plate threw the food away. I observed the Prophet staring at me and noticed signs of anger and dislike on his face. So I said: 'I seek refuge with God at His prophet's rage and hope that you will not curse me.' He said 'Repeat it', I said: 'How can I make amends for my deed?' He answered: 'Prepare a food like hers, find a plate like hers and send them to her.' "[49]

2-Encounters

> *A'ishah was very jealous of her husband so that she was not prepared to see another woman find a place in his heart.*
>
> ***The author***

It is now time to describe 'A'ishah's sharp encounters and clashes with the other wives of the Prophet.

'A'ishah and Safiyah

In a domestic encounter 'A'ishah and Safiyah severely abused

and insulted one another. When the Prophet learnt of the incident, he said to Safiyah who had been deeply hurt at 'A'ishah's insults and boasts: "Why did you not tell her that your father is Aaron and your Uncle Moses?"[50]

'A'ishah says: "I told the Prophet of Safiyah's misconduct and called her names. The Prophet said: 'You have used about Safjyah such words whose pollution contaminates a sea.' "[51]

Safjyah says: "I was weeping when the Prophet entered and on seeing my lamentation, he said: '0 daughter of Huyay, why are you weeping?' She said: 'I have heard that 'A'ishah and Hafsah have slandered me.' "[52]

'A'ishah and Sudah

The quarrel and assault of 'A'ishah with Sudah happened as follows: One day 'A'ishah heard Sudah murmuring a poem meaning: " 'Adi and Taym (two tribes) are trying to find allies for themselves." 'A'ishah lost her temper and turning to Hafsah, daughter of 'Umar, said: "Sudah is trying to mock you and me allusively. I will retaliate this insolence. When you see me grappling with her, come to my aid."[53] Then she rose and attacked Sudah with fist and kicks. Hafsah, too, joined in as preplanned. Umm Salamah, too, who was watching the scene, came to the aid of Sudah. Thus, these four women caused much noise and disturbance, and when the Prophet heard of it, he came and addressed them in these words: "Woe upon you! What do you think you are doing?" 'A'ishah said: "O Prophet! Didn't you hear Sudah saying that 'Adi and Taym are seeking allies?" The Prophet said: "Woe upon you! This poem refers neither to your Taym nor to her 'Adi but she means the 'Adi and Taym of Banu Tamim tribes."

'A'ishah and dowryless women

'A'ishah says: My blood boiled upon observing the women who freely and without expectation of dowry offered themselves in marriage to the Prophet, and I said in anger and hatred: "Could a noble woman of character offer herself?" When the following verse descended:

"You may put off whom you please of them, and you may take to you whom you please, and whom you desire of those whom *you*

had separated provisionally; no blame attaches to you. "[54]

I turned to the Prophet and said: "I see that God, too, approves of your heart-felt wishes"[55] Ibn Sa'd speaks in detail in his book "Tabaqat" about the ladies who offered themselves in marriage without expecting a dowry, and says that the above verse refers especially to Umm Shank Ghaziyah.[56] and Ibn Hajar speaks of the same matter elaborately in his book 'al Isabah".[57]

But there is a difference of opinion among the scholars about the name of the woman referred to in the above verse, claiming that the number of such ladies who offered themselves freely in marriage to the Prophet and were thus subjected to the unkindness and jealousy, and probably anger and hatred of 'A'ishah was more than one, even though the verse has descended about one person only, and unfortunately the said lady has not been truly recognized yet.

But the reason as to why there have been more than one such women is that 'A'ishah refers to them in the plural, saying:

"I... upon observing the women who freely and without expectation of dowry... in marriage..."

Ahmad in his "Musnad", speaks of this same subject in the plural, attributing it to 'A'ishah and says: "'A'ishah reproached the women who desired marriage with the Prophet without a dowry and offered themselves to him."[58]

Muslim in his Sahih narrates quoting Hisham: Khulah, daughter of Hakim was one of the women who proposed marriage to the Prophet without a dowry and offered herself. Hearing of it, 'A'ishah felt very uneasy and said:

"Is it not shameful for a woman to offer herself to a man and propose marriage with him without a dowry?"[59]

'A'ishah with Malikah

After the capture of Mecca, the Prophet wedded Malikah daughter of Ka'b who had been killed by Khalid ibn al-Walid in that battle. She is said to have been a very beautiful and attractive woman who greatly roused 'A'ishah's anger and hatred with this marriage. 'A'ishah, with her opportunist character and unruly womanly temper, went to Malikah and said: "Are you not ashamed to be the wife of the killer of your

father?”

This reproach by ‘A’ishah was enough to deceive Malikah arid she avoided the Prophet, and so he divorced her. Her kins came to him, saying: “She is too young and has been deceived, and her reaction in this matter has not been of her own accord. So forgive and take her back.” But the Prophet did not agree.[60]

‘A’ishah with Asma’

Asma’, daughter of an-Nu’man of Kindah tribe, was one of the women envied by ‘A’ishah. The Prophet wedded Asma’, and ‘A’ishah showing her sensitivity and bringing a pretext on Asma’ being a stranger said sarcastically: “Now it is strangers’ turn and they will soon seize him from us for themselves.”

A group of envoys of the Kindah tribe came to the Prophet, among whom was an-Nu’man Asma”s father, and the Prophet proposed marriage with her.

When the Prophet’s wives saw her, they envied her and to bring disfavor upon her they resorted to trickery and said to her: “If you wish to have a happy life, when the Prophet comes to you, say to him: ‘I take refuge with God from you.’ “Asma’ was easily deceived and did as she was told. The Prophet said:

“Anyone who takes refuge with God will be secure. So you can go back to your house!” And he angrily went out.[61]

Hamzah, son of Abu Usayd as-Sa’idi [62] quotes his father’s account of Asma’, saying: The Prophet wedded Asma’, daughter of an-Nu’man from the Kindah and Jawn tribe, and sent me to fetch her. Upon her arrival ‘A’ishah and Hafsah arranged that one of them should dye Asma”s hair and the other should comb it Meanwhile one of them said to Asma’: “The Prophet likes the ladies who use the phrase ‘I take refuge with God from you.’ And if you wish to be endeared by him, repeat this phrase.” When the Prophet came, Asma’ repeated the phrase she had been taught. On hearing those words, the Prophet covered his face with his sleeve and said three times: “So you have taken refuge with the asylum!” Then he left the room and said to me:

“Abu Usayd! Take her back to her family and offer her two full pieces of canvas cloth.”

Asma’ who was shocked at this occurrence and extremely unhappy at being so tricked, always spoke sadly and regretfully

of that incident and said: "Do not call me Asma' any longer. Call me the unhappy one."[63]

These stories show that the ladies, who were tricked by 'A'ishah to use the above phrase upon encountering the Prophet, were more than one.

'A'ishah with Mariyah

In the seventh year after Hijrah, al-Maquqis[64], governor of Alexandria sent Mariyah and her sister, Shirin, as a gift to the Prophet. They were accompanied by their very old brother Mabur and Hatib,[65] son of Abu Balta'ah, along with a present of five thousand grams of gold, and twenty suits of fine silk and also his famous mule, Duldul, and his personal donkey, 'Afir.

On the way, Hatib encouraged Mariyah and her sister to embrace Islam and they accepted this invitation. But Mabur maintained his creed until he arrived at Medina and met the Prophet.

The Prophet kept Mariyah for himself and settled her in a house in the al-'Aliyah quarter,[66] which is known as Mashrabah Umm Ibrahim today. She was made to wear a veil and was married to him. She became pregnant and gave birth to a boy named Ibrahim in the same house, and Salma, [67] the Prophet's slave-girl acted as midwife and Abu Rafi', her husband, brought the news to the Prophet and received a reward.[68]

Ibrahim's birth occurred in the eighth year after Hijrah, and the group of Ansars who were overjoyed at the birth of this son of the Prophet, did their best to help Mariyah and provide all she needed. They tried to make her housework light, so that she could take a greater care of the Prophet, since they were aware of his affection for her.

Thus when the other wives of the Prophet were informed of Ibrahim's birth, they became very envious of Mariyah and lodged increasing complaints, but none of them showed as much jealousy as 'A'ishah.[69]

'A'ishah tells this story

"I have never been so jealous of any woman as I have of Mariyah. She was very beautiful, had curly hair and was deeply

loved by the Prophet. At first he settled her in the house of Harithah, son of an-Nu'man [70], and when we noticed the Prophet's affection for her we began to treat her badly, and at Last she was so vexed that she complained to him, and he settled her in the al-'Aliyah quarter and visited her there. We could not bear it, and our jealousy was roused very intensely when God granted Mariyah a son whereas we were deprived of having one.[71]

After the birth of Ibrahim one day the Prophet brought him to us and said: "See how he resembles me!" I said: "No, he doesn't resemble you at all." He said: "Don't you see that his whiteness and body resemble mine?" She said: "Naturally, anyone who is given sheep milk, will grow white and fat."[72] It was as a result of such jealousies of 'A'ishah that the chapter at Tahrim (Prohibition) of the Qur'an descended.[73]

According to reliable came to Mariyah in Hafsah's house, and when Hafsah learnt of it, she was hurt and began to complain of the Prophet's conduct, and this went on to such an extent that the Prophet was forced to forbid himself of contact with Mariyah so as to console Hafsah. But in return, he asked Hafsah not to divulge this matter to anyone, and keep to herself this secret as well as other secrets he had told her.

But, despite all the commands of the Prophet, she disregarded his instruction and divulged his secret to 'A'ishah to join her in her machinations. Their intrigue and misbehavior went on to such an extent that chapter at-Tahrim descended for admonishing them and revealing their acts.[74]

Chapter at-Tahri̱m (Prohibition)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

1-0 Prophet! Why do you forbid yourself that which Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

2-Allah indeed has sanctioned for you the expiation of your oaths and Allah is your Protector and He is the Knowing, the Wise.

3-And when the Prophet secretly communicated a piece of

information to one of his wives-but when she informed others of it, and Allah made him to know it, he made known part of it and avoided part; so when he informed her of it, she said: Who informed you of this? He said: The Knowing, the One Aware, informed me.

4-If you both turn to Allah, then indeed your hearts are already inclined to this; and if you back up each other against him then surely Allah it is Who is his Guardian, and Gabriel and the believers that do good, and the angels after that are the aiders.

5-Maybe, his Lord, if he divorce you, will give him in your place wives better than you, submissive, faithful, obedient, penitent, adorers, fasters, widows and virgins.

6-0 you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded.

7-0 you who disbelieve! Do not urge excuses today; you shall be rewarded only according to what you did.

8-0 you who believe! Turn to Allah a sincere turning; maybe your Lord will remove from you your evil and cause you to enter gardens beneath which rivers flow, on the day on which Allah will not abase the Prophet and those who believe with him; their light shall run on before them and on their right hands; they shall say: Our Lord! Make perfect for us our light, and grant us protection, surely Thou has power over all things.

9-0 Prophet! Strive hard against the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and be hard against them; and their abode is hell, and evil is the resort.

10-Allah sets forth an example to those who disbelieve the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut: they were both under two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them so they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said: Enter both the fire with those who enter.

11-AmId Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Pharaoh when she said: My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the garden and deliver me from Pharaoh and his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people.

12-And Mary, the daughter of Imran, who guarded against

her chastity, so We breathed into her of Our inspiration and she accepted the truth of the words of her Lord and His books, and she was of the obedient ones.

Quranic Chapter "at-Tahrim" was descended about 'A'ishah, daughter of Abu Bakr, and Hafsah, daughter of 'Umar ibn alKhattab, and this fact is confirmed by tens of traditions which have come through Ibn 'Abbas the Prophet's cousin, and 'Umar the second caliph.(75) When we discuss the Traditions of 'A we will speak in detail about them.

'A'ishah and memoirs of Khadijah

Although I had not seen Khadijah, levied none of the Prophet's wives as much as I envied Khadijah.

'A'ishah Umm al-Mu'minin

'A'ishah says: "The reason for my jealousy towards Khadjjah was that he often spoke of her and praised her, especially as God had informed him through revelation that a very magnificent palace had been granted to her in heaven "(76)

She further says: Although I had never seen Khadijah, none of the Prophet's wives were envied by me as much as she was, for, the Prophet often spoke praising of her, and he frequently sacrificed a sheep in her name, cutting it up and distributing it in her name.(77)

She also narrates:

"One day Halah, daughter of Khuwaylad, Khadjjah's sister, asked the Prophet to see him. When he heard her voice, he seemed suddenly to remember Khadjjah and was deeply moved, and said: '0 God, it is Halah!'

My jealousy was so roused towards Khad$_1$jah that I said at once: 'Why do you speak so much of that toothless Qurayshi old woman? She has been dead long ago and God has granted you someone better than her!' "(78)

In another narration, she says:

"After this protest, he frowned and was so moved the like of which I had only seen at the moments he received a revelation,

waiting anxiously either for a heavenly message to descend to him or punishment!"[79]

In another narration she notes:

"In that condition, the Prophet said: 'No, God has never given me one better than her for at a time when everyone negated my mission, it was Khadijah who believed in me; and at a time when they took me as a liar, it was Khadijah who confirmed my truthfulness; and at a time when the people had left me in straitened circumstances, it was Khadjjah who made me share her immense wealth; and when God had given me no child from other women, it was Khadijah who brought me offspring's.' "[80]

The Prophet always spoke well of Khadijah and kept alive her memory through the reminiscences about her generosity and benevolence towards his relatives and friends, and giving priority to them. It was these matters that filled 'A'ishah with jealousy and hatred towards Khadijah, and made her protest frequently to the Prophet for mentioning her name and repeating his reminiscences. Moreover, what was worse is the promises she heard the Prophet utter about Khadjjah, maddened her with envy, while she herself received only reproaches. Consequently this resulted in greatly straining her relations with Fatimah the daughter of Khadijah, her husband and his children who were greatly liked by him.

One example of this is observed in a story narrated by Ahmad in this Musnad quoting an-Nu'man son of Bashir. He writes: One day Abu Bakr intended to see the Prophet, and at the same moment he heard 'A'ishah's shouting: "I swear to God I know well that you love 'Ali more than me and my father."

'Ali ibn Abi "Talib speaks as follows about 'A'ishah's enmity towards himself: . . .'But he as totally disregarded intelligence and wisdom, and her heart is inflamed with the sparks of rancor and enmity towards me like the furnace of blacksmiths. If she were asked to act towards others what she has done to me, she would never agree.' The Imam concludes his remark by saying: 'Nevertheless, the respect due to her-is intact, and God will be the judge to her deeds. He can forgive or punish anyone He pleases."

Some remarks about
Ibn Abi al-Hadid al-Mu'tazili

Fatimah was deeply annoyed with 'A'ishah, since the women of Medina reported to her the offending words of A'ishah.

Ibn Abi al-Hadid

Next to the remarks of Imam 'Mi about 'A'ishah's long-standing rancor towards him, we now hear the words of Ibn Abi al-Hadid about this matter. He says: When. I was studying theology, I read out this sermon of the Imam in the presence of my master, ash-Shaykh Abi Ya'qub Yusuf, son of Isma'il al-Lama'ani (may God save him), and asked him to explain the philosophy behind Imam's utterance. He complied with my request and gave an elaborate explanation, whose summary I quote here. I cannot remember all his words, so I must confine myself to this brief account. A part of it comprises his own words, while the rest is mine based on his own ideas. Shaykh Abu Ya'qub says:

A step-mother for Fatimah

The hostility between 'A'ishah and Fatimah began when the Prophet married A'ishah upon Khadijah's death, and she took her place. It was natural for Fatimah to be dissatisfied at having a stepmother, and also natural for a woman to be vexed at her husband's affection for this daughter of his former wife and for the second wife too.

Similarly a daughter dislikes her father's attention to another woman who is a rival of her mother, even though she is no longer alive. Even if Khadijah were still alive and 'A'ishah entered the Prophet's house, their quarrel would be more noisy and violent. Now that she was dead, this hostility would be transferred to and inherited by her daughter.

Moreover, it is said that the Prophet loved 'A'ishah very much[81] and showed her favour. So the more the Prophet showed affection to the new wife, the more uneasy became Fatimah and was more deeply hurt.

Fatimah as the Prophet's darling

The Prophet loved Fatimah more than people expected, and respected her much more than men show affection to their daughters. This went beyond the limit of a parent's love for his child.

The Prophet had repeatedly and on different occasions declared in both private and public meetings that "Fatimah is the lady of all ladies in the world, and she is the equal of Mary, daughter of Imran."(82) On the day of Resurrection when Fatimah walks on, the herald of the Empyrean will proclaim:

"Turn your eyes down, for Fatimah, daughter of Muhammad, is passing."(83)

These are all traditions about the truth of which there is no doubt. It is also stated that the marriage of Fatimah and 'Ali was solemnized in heaven and testified by favorite angels.(84)

The Prophet often used to say: "What pains Fatimah pains me, and what angers her angers me. She is a part of me, and her anxiety makes me worried and anxious."(85)

These and similar matters roused the envoy and uneasiness. of 'A'ishah, and to the same extent that the Prophet honoured and endeared Fatimah, 'A'ishah's jealousy became intense. But we know that even more trifling matters can produce rancor and envy in human hearts.

But to the same extent that 'A'ishah suffered from the respect shown to Fatimah by the Prophet, Imam 'Ali felt pleased, and Fatimah became dearer to him. It often happens that women create enmity in the heart of their husbands, and as the proverb says, "They are companions of the night."

Fatimah often complained of 'A'ishah when some women of Medina and her neighbors came to her and reported the latter's words. Then the same women went to 'A'ishah and told her Fatimah's remarks. As Fatimah complained to 'Mi about 'A'ishah, that lady, too, complained of Fatimah to her own father, since she knew that the Prophet, her husband, would not pay heed to her complaint of Fatimah.

Multilateral rancours

This matter, in its turn, had an undesirable effect on Abu Bakr's spirit and pained him. When he saw that the Prophet

spared no chance to praise 'Ali and had become very intimate with him, the former, too, felt envious of 'Ali and his closeness with the Prophet, while in his capacity as the Prophet's father-in-law, he regarded himself superior to 'Ali.

Talhah 'A'ishah's cousin, too, was not free from this envy and mental anxiety, and 'A'ishah often went to her father and cousin to listen to their words of expectation and complaint, while they, in turn, paid attention to hers. Thus they exchanged with each other their feelings of hostility towards 'Ali and Fatimah, and hardened their hearts towards them. I cannot exonerate 'Ali from engaging in these matters either.

Moreover, during the Prophet's lifetime there had occurred some altercations between A'ishah and 'Ali each of which was enough to rouse latent feelings, and cause mischief.

It is narrated that one day the Prophet was strolling and talking with 'Ali and their private conversation lasted for quite some time.(86) 'A'ishah who was following them unawares, suddenly came upon them and said: "What matter of importance has engaged you two for such a long time?"

It is said that the Prophet became angry at this interruption. It is also narrated that some food was brought for him and he ordered his servant to throw it down; a reaction which is commonly shown by a husband or wife.

The Prophet's intense affection for Fatimah's children

On the one hand, Fatimah had given birth to several male and female children, whereas 'A'ishah had none, and more painful than that, from her viewpoint, was the fact that the Prophet regarded Fatimah's children as his own and called them thus:

"Bring my child. Don't stop my child. What is my son doing?"

How would a woman feel who had no children of her own, and saw that her husband called his grandchildren as his own children, showed them a fatherly affection, and loved them deeply? Would she, too, love them and their mother? Or would she dislike and even hate them? Would she wish them a happy life or would she desire their annihilation?

The most painful of all was the fact that the Prophet ordered to shut the entrance of her father's house facing the mosque

while he allowed the door of 'Ali's house leading to the mosque to be left open.(87) It was also hard for 'A'ishah to tolerate the fact that the Prophet replaced Abu Bakr with 'Ali in the mission of taking Quranic chapter Bara'at to Mecca and reading it to the infidels after having initially assigned this task to him.(88)

When God gave Ibrahim to the Prophet by his wife Mariyah, 'Ali did not abstain from expressing his joy, and offered more willing help to her than he had done for the other ladies of the Prophet. When Mariyah was accused of a blunder, it was 'Ali who did his best to exonerate her and prove the baselessness of the charge in such a tangible way that it left no room for babblers to utter another word.

All these events filled 'A'ishah's heart with rage and hatred of 'Ali and made her more determined for vengeance.

With the death of Ibrahim, a great sorrow was felt by Mariyah, and there came an end to sarcasm and wounding words. Both 'Ali and Fatimah, too, became deeply sad at Ibrahim's death, since they preferred Mariyah to 'A'ishah and wished her to remain superior to other wives of the Prophet in having a son. But destiny did neither realize their wishes nor those of Mariyah.

'Ali and the issue of caliphate

Ali had no doubt that after the Prophet, the caliphate would belong to him and there would be no rival.(89) It was owing to this assurance that when his uncle al-'Abbas at the Prophet's ablution ceremony said to him: "Give me your hand that I may swear allegiance to you so that the people would say that the uncle of the Prophet has sworn allegiance to his cousin. This would benefit you and no one would oppose you any longer," he answered: "O uncle! Is there anyone beside me who covets the caliphate?"

He answered: "You will see soon enough."

'Ali said: "I have no wish to see the issue of my caliphate being settled behind closed shutters and I want all people to participate openly in it, and vote for me." Then he remained silent.

When the Prophet's sickness became serious, he ordered the Usamah army to depart (90) and told Abu Bakr and other

Emigrant and Ansar leaders to take part under that commander in this expedition. If this had taken place and the Prophet passed away, 'Ali's caliphate would be certain.

'Ali himself supposed that with the passing away of the Prophet, Medina would be devoid of a rival to his caliphate, and the people would easily show allegiance to him, and it would be impossible for his rivals and opponents to disagree with it, thus compelling them to obey him.

But Abu Bakr receiving a message from 'A'ishah about the approaching death of the Prophet, left Usamah's army and returned to Medina.

Abu Bakr's performance of prayer with the people

As far as I know**,** 'Ali has introduced 'A'ishah herself as the factor responsible for this scene. It was she who ordered Bilal, his father's slave, to tell him to perform his prayer with the people; for the Prophet is said to have stated that someone should perform the morning prayer with the people without naming that person. But after issuing that order, the Prophet in his last moments while he was leaning on the arms of 'Ali and al-Fadl ibn al-'Abbas, came out and stood at the altar and after performing the prayer, returned home and his last at sunrise.

'Umar considered Abu Bakr's readiness and standing for prayer with the people as a sufficient reason and merit for being chosen as caliph and said: "Which of you allow yourself to be superior to him who has been given precedence in prayer by the Prophet?"

The fact that the Prophet came Out of the house and personally performed the prayer with the people was not taken as an act to check Abu Bakr's Imamate for the people, as only it was said that the Prophet desired to perform that task personally to the possible extent.

Thus, on the basis of this incident and subject, they showed allegiance to Abu Bakr, while 'Ali accused 'A'ishah of being the main element behind that scene and its originator. He repeatedly described this matter in the gatherings of his friends and said: It was not without reason that the Prophet told this to Hafsah and 'A'ishah: "You are the little friend of Yusuf." In this

way, he wanted to show his dislike of what they had done, and indicate especially his anger with 'A'ishah, for, there were Hafsah and 'A'ishah who took advantage of the Prophet's order to take the lead in sending their fathers to act as Imam of the prayer. As the Prophet was aware of their intention, he left the house in a sickly state and by taking Abu Bakr's place at the altar, he himself acted as Imam of the ummah to the last moments of his life. With this action, he wanted to nullify 'A'ishah's role in paving the way for his father's caliphate.

Nevertheless this act of the Prophet in countering the efforts and extensive propaganda of 'Umar and his friends for making possible Abu Bakr's caliphate, did not succeed, especially as 'Umar and his accomplices had already taken preliminary steps for the domination of Abu Bakr as caliph, and had already won the approval of a number for this action. A number of Emigrant and Ansar elites had joined them in favour of this plan, and it seemed that time and heavenly destiny, too, assisted them.

These happenings were the most painful- and shattering of all for 'Ali - a great calamity which hurt his spirit, for which he blamed none but 'A'ishah. He often spoke of this to his intimate friends and asked God for judgment. Above all, he suffered much and bore many discomforts in refusing allegiance to Abu Bakr until they forced him to submit to it. (91)

From the moment of the death of the Prophet till the burial of the sick body of his daughter, Fatimah a short time afterwards, 'A'ishah regularly cut biting remarks at Fatimah and both 'Ali and Fatimah could do nothing but remain patient, and only disclose their complaint and suffering with God.

'A'ishah benefited from the support of her father and other authorities of the caliphate, and was shown greater respect every day, whereas 'Ali and Fatimah were regarded as vanquished ones, driven away from the center of power and influence. They seized Fadak from her and despite all her efforts she could not get it back. (92)

Meanwhile, the women who visited Fatimah, repeated 'A'ishah's harsh words for her and badly hurt her feelings. The same women carried the remarks of her husband and herself back to 'A'ishah and fanned up the fire of rancor and hostility between both sides.

But there were great differences between the two sides, namely the victor and the vanquished, the ruler and the ruled. Under such a situation, the stings and sarcasm of the victor is most painful for the vanquished and obviously such mental tortures inflicted by the enemy are much more terrible than any other calamity.

Here I interrupted the words of the ash-Shaykh and said:
"Do you affirm this too? The Prophet did not appoint anyone for leading the prayer, and it was 'A'ishah who waywardly took steps for sending her father on this mission."

In answer, the ash-Shaykh said: "I do not say so; it is 'Ali who says so, and his account is not mine. He himself was involved with the matter and was a witness. But the reports I have received show that the Prophet had appointed Abu Bakr for the prayer, whereas 'Ali's evidence is based on his own knowledge of the affairs, and he has witnessed the center of this activity or has at least strongly suspected it." Then the ash Shaykh continued: Eventually Fatimah died, and the Prophet's wives took part in the funeral ceremony except 'A'ishah who did not only pretend sickness- and abstained from attending the mourning ceremony of the Prophet's daughter, but also her words of gladness about this happening were reported to 'Ali.

After Fatimah's death 'Ali pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr and it is said that following 'All's allegiance 'A'ishah openly expressed her joy that no rival or opponent was left for her father's caliphate and 'Ali's claim of caliphate proved of no avail.

Conditions remained the same until 'Uthman's caliphate, but the old rancor continued to exist and blood continued to boil.

As time passed, 'Ali's sufferings increased and his mental pressure became more intense until 'Uthman was assassinated. 'A'ishah herself played an effective role in rousing people's antagonism for 'Uthman as she stubbornly opposed him and in encouraging people to kill him, she said: "May God kill 'Uthman!" The reason why she rose against him and instigated people to kill him, was the fact that she hoped that with the death of 'Uthman who came from the Umayyads, caliphate would once more return to her own house namely Taym tribe and in order to attain that goal, she had, in anticipation nominated Talhah her cousin, for the position of caliph.

But when ‘Uthman was killed, the people, contrary to ‘A’ishah’s expectations chose ‘Ali as caliph and swore allegiance to him. When ‘A’ishah heard the report, she cried out involuntarily: “Pity for ‘Uthman! He was innocently killed!”

It was thus that ‘A’ishah showed her old hostility towards ‘Ali worked hard in rousing the opportunists against the Imam, and finally started the battle of “al-Jamal” in the way we have already described.

This was a brief account of the remarks of ash-Shaykh Abu Ya’qub who was neither a follower of the faith of the Prophet’s household nor did he support the Shi’ah.

We have given the main but brief account of the writing of Ibn Abi al-Hadid in describing the Imam’s sermon wherein ‘A’ishah’s old rancor has been explicitly described. Scholar Ibn Abi al-Hadid has clearly and impartially explained he ambiguous points of A’ishah’s life during her marital life, her relations with the near kins of the Prophet and her actions after his death. We merely confine ourselves to what we have already stated about other aspects of her life; for, if we were to engage in further research about various periods of her life and her influence on the Islamic society (which would in itself require the compilation of a separate book) it is feared that this task might deviate us from our main purpose which is a discussion and investigation of her traditions.

Summary

What we have described in this chapter briefly shows that ‘A’ishah was a very stubborn and envious woman. The examples of her character may be seen in her marital life with the Prophet, and her conduct towards other wives and members of his family.

Moreover, as we have only briefly narrated the events in this chapter, we will elaborate upon them in the following pages to denote that she showed the same intense ardor and attachment to preserve the interests of her own relatives, family and party.[(93)] and was deeply prejudiced. This, coupled with violence, made her commit horrible deeds and utter sharp, biting and insulting words.

Part Two
'A'ishah during caliphates of Abu Bakr and 'Umar

The two Sheikhs (Elders)

1-Abu Bakr, nicknamed as-Siddiq and al-'Atiq (truthful and liberated), was called 'Abd Allah son of Abu Quhafah 'Uthman of the Taym al-Qurayshi tribe and his mother was Umm al. Khayr nicknamed Salma or Layla, daughter of 'Amir, from the Taym al-Qurayshi tribe.

Abu Bakr was born in Mecca two or three years after the event of 'Am al-Fil, and he belonged to the group of people who embraced Islam after Khadijah, 'Ali, Zayd and Ja'far. He accompanied the Prophet in his emigration from Mecca to Medina and participated in the battle of Badr and subsequent battles. After the passing away of the Prophet and before his burial, by means of a simple coup d'etat, he seized the rein of affairs by his presence in the as-Saqjfah of Banu Sa'idah and with the aid of his old friend 'Umar.

He died on 22nd of Jumada32 ath-Thani (Jumada II), 13th year after Hijrah and was buried near the Prophet. He lived for 63 years, and acted as caliph for two years, three months and 10 to 26 days.

2-Abu Hafs al-Faruq 'Umar, son of al-Khattab, was grandson of Nufayl, from 'Adi al-Qurayshi tribe. His mother was Hantamah, the adopted daughter of Hisham or Hashim; from Banu Makhzum tribe.

He embraced Islam after fifty people did so, and after some time he emigrated from Mecca to Medina, and took part in the title of Badr and subsequent battles.

Abu Bakr, while on his deathbed, chose 'Umar as his r, and it was during the latter's caliphate that the

Muslims' victories were won outside the Arabian Peninsula.

At the age. (94) of 55 or according to other accounts, at 63 he died of a wound caused by Abu Lu'lu'ah, slave of al-Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah on 26 Dhu al-Hijjah of 23rd year after Hijrah, and was buried on 1st Muharram 24 AH near Abu Bakr's tomb. He was caliph for ten years, six months and five days. Both 'Umar and Abu Bakr, who were sincere friends since the early Islam, were called the Two Sheikhs of an equal rank.

The period of tranquility

Right to the end of the rule of Abu Bakr; 'Umar and 'Uthman and until she was alive, 'A'ishah was the only woman who issued verdicts.

Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd

1-The sole lady mufti of Islam

'A'ishah's whole life, with the exception of the period of caliphate of her father Abu Bakr, and his sincere friend 'Umar, was spent in intense political conflicts and indefatigable party activities so that, by those means, the caliphate could be brought back to Taym house and her endeared relatives could assume high positions in the government.

But as already said, during the caliphate of the two Elders, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, she was very pleased since her party had dominated other known parties of Medina, held the rein of the country's affairs, and she enjoyed peace of mind especially because her position was firmly established owing to the particular attention and excessive respect shown to her by the caliph himself and other authorities. Thus, the Muslims and world people turned their attention to her, and were more drawn towards her than to other wives of the Prophet, to the extent that till now her rank and position have seemed more conspicuous than other companions and wives of the Messenger of God.

The Prophet died while nine of his ladies were still alive. But history does not mention That any of them has won as much

attention and respect from Abu Bakr and 'Umar, or has been consulted so much for her view and verdict. Our evidence is attested by the statement of Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat quoted from al-Qasim son of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr. He writes. : During the rule of Abu Bakr 'Umar and 'Uthman, 'A'ishah was the only lady who issued verdicts right; to the end of her life.(95)

Elsewhere in the same book he writes quoting Mahmud ibn Lubayd: " 'A'ishah issued verdicts to the end of her life during the caliphate of 'Umar and 'Uthman and gave orders. 'Umar and, after him, 'Uthman and other companions of the Prophet referred to her, inquired about the Prophet' traditions and ways, and received instructions."

Moreover, when 'Umar arranged a monthly pension for each of the Prophet's wives, he gave a higher sum to 'A'ishah. This point is mentioned as follows by Ibn Sa'd in his Tabaqat quoting Mus'ab ibn Sa'd: " 'Umar arranged monthly ension f en thousand for each of the Prophet's wives but he gave priority to 'A'ishah and set twelve thousand for her, his reason being that the Prophet had greater affection for her."(96)

2-'A'ishah goes on Hajj pilgrimage

'Umar, the ruler of the time, gave priority to her, referred to her for verdicts and information about the Prophet's traditions, and showed great respect to her in public, and higher dignity to her position, and fixed a higher share of salary for her than for other wives of the Prophet. Nevertheless he prevented her and other ladies of the Prophet from leaving Medina even for a pilgrimage to Mecca. His policy was, not to allow some particular figures and higher companions of the Prophet to leave Medina at all. So when az-Zubayr asked permission to take part in the war, 'Umar said.(97): "No! I cannot agree; for, I that the Prophet's friends might mix up with the people cause their deviation."(98)

But at the end of his life, 'Umar changed his mind about preventing the exit of the Prophet's ladies from Medina. Ibn Sa'd's Tabaqat describes this matter as follows: "'Umar ibn alb checked the Prophet's wives from leaving Medina even pilgrimage. But in the 23rd year after Hijrah when he took his last Hajj pilgrimage (since it was in the same

year that he died after his return from the pilgrimage) all the Prophet's wives except Zaynab and Sudah asked 'Umar's permission to leave Medina for Hajj pilgrimage. After the Prophet's death, Zaynab and Sudah never left their house or Medina even for Hajj pilgrimage, and said: "After his departure no camel will serve as our carrier," meaning that they would never travel again.(99) Sudah said: "I have performed my Hajj pilgrimage in the Prophet's time, and now I stay at home by God's order." Anyhow, 'Umar agreed to the request of the Prophet's wives and ordered to prepare camel-litters for them with green covers so that the ladies would remain hidden from men's eyes. Then he entrusted their super-vision to 'Abd arRahman 'Awf. (100) and 'Uthman ibn 'Affan issued the necessary orders, and made arrangement for their departure from Medina to Mecca.

'Uthman as the leader of the caravan, cried out from time to time: "Take care! No one has the right to approach these litters and take a glance at the Prophet's ladies!" He himself stopped every man from approaching them, and if anyone came near, he shouted: "Stay away! Stay away!" 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf, too, who moved in the rear of the caravan, acted constantly like 'Uthman.

Miswar ibn Mukharrimah (101) says: "It happened sometimes that a man halted on the way to repair the outfit of his animal or make his camel kneel down. In such a case, 'Uthman who was in the vanguard of the caravan, approached him and stood by, and if the track was wide enough, he ordered the caravan to alter its course slightly in order to keep away from that man and turn more to the right or left of the track. Otherwise he ordered the caravan to halt until that man finished his task and remounted his animal. Then 'Uthman ordered the caravan to proceed. I myself saw that he ordered those who had left Mecca to proceed in the opposite direction to halt on the right or'left side of the way and make their camels kneel down until the caravan went out of their sight.

Wherever 'Umar halted to rest, the Prophet's wives, too, dismounted, and were allowed to rest mostly in a valley, while he himself halted at its entrance. Another narration says that the wives were settled in a blocked valley while them en stayed

at its entrance, or rested under trees with no one being allowed to pass near them.

Except for this pilgrimage, 'A'ishah never went out of Medina during 'Umar's caliphate, and spent her days in her house in full tranquility and high respect.

The authorities referred to her to seek her verdict concerning some matters, and she provided a suitable answer on behalf of the Prophet, and quoted a tradition. In addition to receiving a higher pension, these visits of the authorities to her for a verdict and instruction alone, were the signs of a great respect shown to her by the caliph. Thus when the caliph of the Muslims showed her such a respect, obviously the duty of other Muslims towards her became perfectly clear.

Now we end this chapter with a story which depicts respect shown by the caliph 'Umar to 'A'ishah. Dhakwan the freed slave of 'A'ishah, narrates: A basket full of the spoils of the war in the conquest of Iraq including a jewel was taken to 'Umar. 'Umar asked his companions: "Do you know the value of this jewel?" They replied in the negative, nor did they know how to divide it among the Muslims.

'Umar said: "May I send this jewel to 'A'ishah on account of her love for4he Prophet?" They agreed and he sent it to her. 'A'ishah said: "What a great share God has given 'Umar in this great victory!"(102)

The traditions of 'A'ishah in support of the caliphate

She was the staunchest supporter of the rule of Abu Bakr and 'Umar.

An except from this book

An opportunity for making traditions

We can say almost with certainty that there were very few traditions belonging to 'A'ishah during the caliphate of her father Abu Bakr, and rule of 'Umar; for, on the one hand, in this period the attention of all Muslims was turned to the victories, frequent campaigns and capture, of the spoils of war;

and on the other hand, due to the existence of intellectual harmony amongst them and the absence of disagreement especially submission of the people to the caliph, and also because most people of Medina had a direct contact with the Prophet or lived at the time of his companions, the number of traditions was very small, and there was also no need for their being large.

Nevertheless in this period, a few traditions have been quoted from ‘A’ishah, most of which are in support of the government of the time, namely the rule of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, since ‘A’ishah was the staunchest supporter of the rule of her father Abu Bakr, and his loyal friend ‘Umar, and in order to establish their caliphate firmly in people’s mind there was nothing better and surer than quoting a tradition from the Prophet concerning their rank and dignity, and exhibit their importance through the Prophet’s words.

Here we will quote examples of such traditions created during the rule of these two Elders. The following tradition which Muslim quotes in his Sahih from ‘A’ishah, belongs to this group:

‘A’ishah said: “When the Prophet was in his sickbed, he said to me: Tell your father and brother to come here so that I make a will, since I fear that a light-minded, person may desire or claim to be worthier of the caliphate, whereas God and believers do not consider anyone worthier than Abu Bakr.”(103)

al-Bukhari narrates from Abu Malikah(104): ‘A’ishah said:
“When the Prophet’s illness got worse, he said to ‘Abd arRahman son of Abu Bakr: Bring me a shoulder bone(105) or a tablet to write something about Abu Bakr and make recommendations about his person so that no one rises in op position to him.”

But as soon as ‘Abd ar-Rahman went to carry out the Prophet’s order, he added: “O Abu Bakr! God and believers will never allow any differences to arise concerning your right.” (If in accordance with the words of the Prophet God and believers would not permit any difference to arise about the rule of Abu Bakr and his caliphate, then no written recommendation and will would be needed.)

Also Muslim narrates in his Sahih from Abu Malikah (106):

‘A’ishah was asked: “If the Prophet were to choose a successor, whom would he choose?” She answered: “Abu Bakr.” They asked: “Whom would he nominate next to Abu Bakr as caliph?” She said: “ ‘Umar.” They asked: “And after ‘Umar?” She said:
“Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah.”(107)

There exist many such traditions from ‘A’ishah about the qualities of the Two Elders and their excellence. We will also deal with them in the section on narration’s. Here, we will confine ourselves to a few more of these traditions.

The period of appearance of these traditions

In all probability, the time of the propagation of such traditions was the period of the caliphate of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, since their names come in succession, and if the Prophet were to nominate a successor for himself, he would have named them in the same order.(108)

These traditions may be divided into four groups: First that group of traditions in which the names of the first four caliphs including ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib are mentioned in the same order that they assumed power. These traditions seem to have appeared after the caliphate of ‘Ali and also that of the other three.

The traditions narrated by al-Muhibb at-Tabari in his ar-Rayad an-nadrah from the Prophet is as follows: The Prophet said: “One thousand years before the creation of Adam I Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali were lights on the right side of divine Empyrean. Then, when Adam was created, God placed us behind him, and we were transferred from each chaste generation to another until God placed me behind ‘Abd Allah Abu Bakr behind Abu Quhafah, ‘Umar behind al-Khattab ‘Uthman behind ‘Affan and ‘Ali behind Abu_Talib.

Then God chose them for me, and so God made Abu Bakr my (the truthful one), ‘Umar my al-Faruq (the discerning
‘Uthman my Dhu an-Nurayn (of two lights) and ‘Ali my a Wasi (friend). Therefore, anyone who speaks ill of my companies, will be speaking ill of me, and anyone who insults be insulting God and he will be thrown into the fire.”
following reasons explain the time and circumstances of the publication of this and other traditions:

1-These traditions must have appeared after the caliphate of Imam ‘Ali, and even a long time after that, since, as we have already said, in this tradition there is especially a mention of abuse and insult, and we know that insult and abuse became prevalent from the time of Mu’awiyah’s rule onward and upon his order, whereas there was no such custom in the Prophet’s time to abuse his companions in order to make it necessary for the Prophet to issue such a verdict.

2-Although the names of the four caliphs of early Islam are mentioned in the order of their succession, these traditions cannot have appeared during the caliphate of the Imam ‘Ali since as we shall see in this book and also in the next volumes, before the Imam accepted the caliphate, the people were divided into two perfectly distinct groups: one group violently and openly abused ‘Uthman and another group was displeased with ‘Ali and spoke ill of him. In that case, who has propagated such a tradition, and why?

3-Although the time of Mu’awiyah was a period of abuse and insult, and also rivalry in the fabrication of traditions, the basis of it was a conflict brought about against ‘Ali and his Sons and Banu Hashim’s house, and their followers. The Umayyad’s policy required to create division between ‘Ali and the other three caliphs so as to omit his name from their group and give those three an overall superiority over ‘Ali, and this policy was continued by the caliphate system to the end of the Umayyads’ rule.

4-Nevertheless, there is no alternative but to say that the time of the publication of the said tradition coincides with the period of the weakness of the Umayyads and comes prior to the rise of the Abbasids, the reason being that on assumption of power by the Abbasid caliphs, they too, did their utmost to put the followers of ‘Ali under great pressure and like their predecessors, the Umayyads, made use of the smallest pretexts to cruelly suppress and massacre them.

Therefore the most suitable time for the fabrication and publication of this tradition was the end of the Umayyad period and beginning of the call to the people in the name of the Prophet’ house; for, it was at that time when the Banu Hashim had formed the two lines of Alawites and Abbasids, and joined

together to overthrow the Umayyad government. It was the Abbasid policy at that time in opposition to that of the Umayyads to place 'Ali's name alongside those of the other three caliphs in rank and excellence, whereas we know that the Umayyads praised those three caliphs and abused 'Ali and omitted his name from their rank.

It seems that the Abbasids had even taken another step for shattering the foundation of the Umayyads' claim and policy at that particular time, to omit the name of 'Uthman from the group of the first four caliphs. The following tradition may serve as the best support for our claim concerning fabrication of such traditions in that period.

It is narrated from Jabir ibn 'Abd Allah al-Ansari (109) who said: "We were with the Prophet in a palm grove of Medina when he suddenly turned to us and said: 'Just now a man will come to you from heaven.' We looked around to see this heavenly man when at that moment Abu Bakr arrived and we congratulated him for having such a rank. A little later, the Prophet said: 'Another heavenly man will come to you now.

This time we saw 'Umar arrive and we offered him our felicitation for this honour. Soon after, the third time the Prophet told us that another heavenly man would soon arrive, and then he raised his arms heavenward under the palm branches and said: O God! How would it be if you let this man

'Ali?' Soon 'Ali arrived and we expressed our joy to him on

this great blessing."

The reason as to why we point out the invalidity of such traditions is not that we deny the virtue and excellence of the Prophet and his chaste household or his good companions. Not at all! We never deny these qualities. But we do not believe that between those companions who have assumed the seat of caliphate and those ones who have been unable to gain such a position, God would allow a discrimination to such an extent the former group would be created of light and the latter of clay!

In view of these matters and other reasons, which will be with in their proper place, we look doubtfully at the validity and authenticity of those traditions in which the names four caliphs have been mentioned in the order of their

succession to the caliphate.

The second groups of traditions are those in which only the names of the first three caliphs from Abu Bakr to ‘Uthman are mentioned.

In our opinion and in view of what we said about the first group of traditions, these traditions have been narrated after ‘Uthman became caliph and not prior to that. And if in some of them ‘Uthman’s assassination is mentioned, then those traditions must have been narrated after his death, not before.

The third groups of traditions are those in which only the names of the Two Elders are mentioned. We believe that these traditions appeared after ‘Umar assumed power, not before his caliphate.

The fourth groups are those traditions, which mention only Abu Bakr’s caliphate, and as ‘Umar’s name is not mentioned, they’ are in all probability narrated prior to ‘Umar’s nomination as successor to Abu Bakr. Therefore, the tradition related to the written will of Abu Bakr may have been narrated during his own time, since there is no mention of ‘Umar.

The tradition stating that “if the Prophet were to nominate a successor he would chose Abu Bakr first, then ‘Umar and then Abu ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrah” has in all probability, been narrated during ‘Umar’s caliphate and before ‘Uthman’s election, since ‘Umar made this comment about Abu ‘Ubaydah:

“If Abu ‘Ubaydah were alive, I would choose him as my successor.”(110)

Here we have quoted some of ‘A’ishah’s traditions which are likely to have been narrated during the caliphate of the Two Elders, while there exist many traditions from her which must be related to the period following the caliphate of the Two Sheikhs. This includes the following tradition, which describes the lamentations of the jinn mourning for ‘Umar. This tradition must have appeared after his death or a long time after him.

The jinn mourn for ‘Umar

I know the mourners were of the jinn.

‘A’ishah

In the previous chapter, we stated that ‘A’ishah quoted some traditions from the Prophet in order to support and establish the rule of her father, Abu Bakr, and his old friend, ‘Umar. After a survey of some of them, we found that the time of their appearance by no means corresponds with the period of the rule of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, but they became prevalent many years after them. One of these traditions is the one related to the lamentations of the jinn mourning for ‘Umar which has, in all probability, been narrated after his death or some time afterwards.

The tradition is as follows: Three days before ‘Umar was killed, the jinn sat in mourning for him and sang the following elegy (111):

“Would the earth grow grass once more after the assassinated one who lay down in his blood, and the world sank in darkness and gloom mourning for him?

May God grant such a leader as you a good reward on our behalf and bestow His favour and grace upon your torn body.

He who perches on the wing of thought so that he might perform such good deeds as yours, will never succeed.

In your rule you have accomplished tasks in the best manner, but what dormant mischief’s exposed their visage after you!

What I never thought of before and had no idea was that the death of such a leader would be brought about by this gray-eyed, leopard-natured executioner!”

We think it probable that this story was made up after ‘Umar’s death or even a long time after that, for the following reasons:

1-In the said poem, a reference is made to the rise of mischief’s and sedition’s all of which are related to the second half of ‘Uthman’s caliphate and subsequent period, and not to end of ‘Umar’s rule and beginning of ‘Uthman’s caliphate.

The poem says:

"What dormant mischief s exposed their visage after you!"

2-If we suppose that the mention of mischief s is an indirect allusion, even then the mention of 'Umar's assassin so clearly and explicitly only three days or more after the crime, shows that it must be subsequent to the event, preceding it.

3-The point that the jinn, according to 'A'ishah three days before the occurrence of such a horrible crime by a gray-eyed, leopard-natured assassin, should expose the matter is a point quite contrary to the explicit text of the Qur'an; for, according to the words of God in the story of Prophet Solomon, the jinn were unaware of even two steps in front of them, Let alone their being so explicit about a matter which would take place three day later.

The jinn were involved with pain and suffering for a whole year and knew nothing about Solomon's death, which had happened very close to them. Solomon who leaned on his staff was dead for one year and his dead body had remained in that position. They saw him all the time and were engaged zealously in building his palace day and night. Then after a year when termite had eaten his staff, it broke down and his lifeless body toppled over. It was then that the jinn realized that they had been laboring in vain for a whole year. This being the case, how could they have known the secret about 'Umar's fearful death by such a gray-eyed leopard-natured assassin three days before it was about to happen, and sit in mourning for the caliph in front of 'A'ishah in the land of al-Hasbah?

Anyhow this tradition must have been narrated after 'Umar's death, not before it, even if we consider the above poem to have belonged to 'A'ishah. But we see that Abu al-Faraj says in al-Aghani (112) about the translation of Shamakh: Shamakh had two brothers both of whom were poets. One of them was called Muzarrad, and the other Jaz' who has composed an elegy about 'Umar. He says in a1-Ishtiqaq:(113) Darar had three sons who had embraced Islam, and one of them had composed an elegy about 'Umar. Anyhow these verses are said to have been composed by Shamakh or Jaz'. According to another narration, 'A'ishah describes the matter for her sister Umm Kulthum daughter of Abu Bakr, as follows: In his last Hajj pilgrimage, 'Umar allowed the Prophet's wives to go on pilgrimage with

him. In that journey when 'Umar departed from al-Hasbah I saw approaching a camel rider whose face was covered and only his eyes were visible. He asked: "Had he ('Umar) stayed here?" Someone said: "Yes, he halted here." The camel-rider made his camel kneel, and then in a loud voice recited the above elegy about 'Umar. I ordered one of my companions to find out who the poet was and introduce him to me. He went there but found no one, since he did not see him anywhere, whereas lie had recited the poem in front of me. I swear to God that I think he was a jinni.

This tradition further says that when 'Umar was killed, the people attributed that poem to the sons of Darar. (114)

This narration has been quoted by Abu al-Faraj in al-Aghani in the biography of Shamakh and by Ibn 'Abd al-Barr in al-Isti'ab on the life of 'Umar. But Ibn Sa'd account in Tabaqat has a slightly different wording, but the sense of all three is the same. In al-Isabah Ibn Hajar, declaring that the tradition is genuine, quotes the same narration from Umm Kulthum A'ishah's sister. The reason as to why the tradition quoted by Ibn Hajar is genuine, is narrated to nullify the rumor which attributes the poem to Shamakh or his brother, specially when it is stipulated in that tradition that 'A'ishah herself had, in her last Hajj pilgrimage with 'Umar, witnessed in Mash'ar alHaram the recitation of the elegy by the jinn mourning for Umar, and there is no doubt about this matter.

And as 'A'ishah has said so, therefore the jinn must have sat in mourning for 'Umar three days prior to his death and composed that elegy about him, while this caliph was killed upon his return to Medina from this journey. Then afterwards the poem has been recited by these people, who in their ignorance have attributed it to the sons of Darar.

'A'ishah herself had seen a camel rider with a covered face inquiring about 'Umar's halting place first after his departure, and another anonymous person guided him to that spot. Then the rider made his camel kneel and loudly recited that elegy on 'Umar's death. Then 'A'ishah sent an attendant to discover the veiled man's identity, but he had disappeared, whereas he had made his camel kneel down in front of 'A'ishah!

Therefore there is no doubt that the veiled man must have

been a jinni, otherwise how did he disappear and no one saw him any more? On this very ground 'A'ishah swore that he was a jinni.

So if A'ishah had witnessed the incident herself and had taken an oath upon it, would anyone doubt that the said elegy had been composed by anyone but the jinni, declaring 'Umar's murder some time before it actually occurred?

After this oath, let everyone say what he wishes or claims that the poem has been composed by the sons of Darar after 'Umar's death; for, in his claim would be null and void, since it is proved that the elegy has been composed by the jinn in Mina before 'Umar's death and before his return to Medina and his subsequent murder.

In addition to what we have stated before, what adds to our doubt about the authenticity of this tradition is that even if we admit? that the sighting of the jinni and his recitation have occurred for the sole benefit of the Prophet's wives and consequently all those thousands of pilgrims who were present at Mina along with 'Umar in that year were deprived of the benefit of this sight, then 'A'ishah was not the only lady Of the Prophet present there, and most of the ladies, except Zaynab and Sudah, accompanied her throughout the journey. How was it then that these ladies did not witness the incident, nor hear the recitation of the elegy for 'Umar by the jinn, and that this tradition has been recited by 'A'ishah alone? There also exists another tradition rejecting the attribution of this poem to a human being, emphasizing its origin to the jinn as mentioned by 'A'ishah.

It is stated in Tabaqat of Ibn Sa'd through Musa ibn 'Uqbah:

'A'ishah asked who was the composer of this poem? They answered: Darar's son."

'A'ishah says: "After hearing this, I met Darar's son and spoke of the matter with him, but he swore that at that time he had not been in Mina."

It makes no difference to us whether this narration, like the other two traditions of 'A'ishah, is genuine or weak" as Ibn Hajar says.[115] However, it is important that this tradition shows us that there is a difference of opinion as to whether the composer of the poem was a human being or a jinni, and even at

that time the people were doubtful about it. It is for this reason that, in order to remove this doubt and argument about those two traditions, authentic evidence has been narrated from ‘A’ishah.

Reciprocal respect

‘Umar uses ‘A’ishah’s house as the consultative assembly’s seat where the issue of the caliphate and government should be settled.
Text of the book

During the whole period of the caliphate of the two Elders, ‘A’ishah was shown a particular respect by them. She, too, in her turn, spared no reverence towards the caliphate and exalted both the caliphs and their position publicly. Thus her humility and modesty played an important role in winning the submission and consent of the people of the ruling caliph.

The caliphs, too, showed no negligence in paying a special respect to her, winning her consent and giving her a preferential treatment over the other wives of the Prophet.

This reciprocal respect continued to be displayed throughout the rule of the two elder caliphs, especially down to the moment of ‘Umar’s death. Such mutual respect, friendship and modesty are perfectly evident in the last messages exchanged between ‘Umar and ‘A’ishah.

al-Bukhari says in his book entitled “Fada’il ashab an-Nabi”, and Ibn Sa’d in his Tabaqat describes ‘Umar’s life, quoting ‘Amr ibn Maymun, in a long narration(116): ‘Umar told his son, ‘Abd to visit ‘A’ishah and deliver this message: “‘Umar sends greetings and begs permission to have his body buried after ‘death by the tomb of the Prophet of God and Abu Bakr’s.”

‘Abd Allah, son of ‘Umar, asked Leave to enter her house and saw her sitting down and weeping. He delivered his father’s message, and she answered: “I had already chosen that site for myself, but I give priority to the caliph.” ‘Abd Allah carried the answer to his father, and then ‘Umar asked: ‘What news?” He

answered: “All went as you wished. She has agreed.” ‘Umar said: “Thank God! I had hoped much for this.”

He chose ‘A’ishah’s house as the council’s seat

Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih says in al-’Iqd al-farid [117]: In his talk to six people who had been nominated as candidates for the caliphate, ‘Umar had said: “On the approval and permission of ‘A’ishah, get together in her house for consultation and choose one from among you as caliph.”

When ‘Umar died and was buried, al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad, on ‘A’ishah’s permission, assembled the members of the council in her house. At this time, ‘Amr ibn al-’As and al-Mughayrah ibn Shu’bah arrived and sat down at her door. But Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas drove them away with pebbles, saying: “Do you intend to include yourselves in the council at ‘A’ishah’s house for choosing the caliph and thus claim to be equal to us?”

Now that these four names are mentioned, introducing them here would not be out of place.

al-Miqdad

al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi was the son of Amr ibn Tha’labah. Owing to a murder which had occurred in his family in pagan times, he fled to Hadhramaut, and made a pact with the Kindah tribe. Later on, owing to his quarrel with Abu Shimr who wounded him in the leg with his sword, al-Miqdad fled to Mecca, and made a pact with al-Aswad ibn ‘Abd Yaghx4h to become his adopted son. Thenceforth, he came to be known as al-Miqdad ibn al-Aswad al-Kindi. When divine verdict descended that the Muslims should be given a name related to their fathers, he was renamed al-Miqdad ibn ‘Amr. He died in the year 33 after the Hijrah.[118]

‘Amr ibn al-’As

Abu ‘Abd Allah or Abu Muhammad, ‘Amr ibn al-’As was of the Banu Sahm of Quraysh, and his mother was Nabighah, daughter of Harmalah who was a war captive and was put up for sale in the market of ‘Ukkaz. al-Fakah, son of alMughayrah, bought her and she was transferred later to ‘Abd Allah ibn ad’an, and then to al-’As ibn Wa’il from whom ‘Amr

was born (His mother, Nabighah, had been a notorious prostitute in pagan times).

Quraysh sent ‘Amr ibn al-’As to Abyssinia to change the attitude of an-Najashi (Negus) towards Ja’far ibn Abi_Talib and other Muslims who had accompanied him in the emigration to Abyssinia, and bring them back to Mecca, but Negus turned them away.

‘Amr ibn al-’As embraced Islam in the 8th year after the Hijrah, six months before the capture of Mecca. In ‘Umar’s caliphate, Egypt was conquered by him, and he was appointed its governor by the caliph and he held that post until the fourth year of ‘Uthman’s caliphate. Then he was dismissed by ‘Uthman with the result that he joined ‘Uthman’s opponents and embarked on a propaganda and instigation against him until ‘Uthman was killed. Then ‘Amr joined Mu’awiyah and on the pretext of avenging ‘Uthman’s blood, fought ‘Ali. It was also through his cunning that the shattered army of Mu’awiyah in the battle of Siffin placed copies of the Holy Qur’an atop of spears, and a battle which was on the point to putting an end to Mu’wiyah, proved inconclusive.

When ‘Ali’s army nominated Abu Musa al-Ash’ari for arbitration, Mu’awiyah chose ‘Amr ibn al-’As on his part, and eventually ‘Amr ibn al-’As deceived Abu Musa, making him remove ‘Ali from the caliphate, and himself named Mu’awiyah as the caliph. As a reward for this service and as a condition set by ‘Amr ibn al-’As Mu’awiyah offered him the life-long governorship of Egypt.

After killing Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, ‘Amr ibn al-’As continued to hold that post until or after the year 43 of the Hijrah and was also buried there upon his death (Refer to al Isti’ab al-Isabah, Usd al-ghabah and Tabaqat).

Al-Mughayrah ibn Shu’bah

Al-Mughayrah, son of Shu’bah ibn Abi ‘Amir ibn Mas’ud ath-Thaqafi embraced Islam in the time of the battle of al-Khandaq, and then after emigrating to Medina took part in the battle of Hudaybiyah. The Prophet sent him together with Abu Sufyan to smash the idols of Thaqif in at-Ta’if. His eyes were damaged in the battle of al-Yarmuk. He was appointed by

‘Umar as governor of Basra and as he was accused of adultery which was duly testified, he was dismissed by ‘Umar. Sometime later, he was given the governorship of Kufah. Eventually, he died there as a governor appointed by Mu’awiyah. It is said that he married 300 or as some say, 1000 women after his conversion to Islam.[119]

Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas

Abu Ishaq Sa’d was the son of Abi Waqqas (whose name was Malik ibn Uhayb al-Qurayshj, of the Zuhri tribe). He was one of the seven pioneers who embraced Islam. He was the prime archer in the Islamic army, and took part in the battle of Badr and other battles. He acted as commander of the Islamic army in the conquest of Iraq and was the first man to capture that land., He built the town of Kufah and was appointed its governor by ‘Umar. ‘Umar chose him as one of the six candidates for the caliphate. He retired after ‘Uthman’s death, and eventually died in the year 50 after the Hijrah as a result of the poison given to him through Mu’awiyah’s plot, and was buried in al-Baqi’.[120]

Now we resume our account and follow up the matter of reciprocal respect between ‘Umar and ‘A’ishah

We see how the man who had vanquished Caesar and Kasra and seized their lands from them to break them up, the man who had dealt lashes on the backs of the Prophet’s companions, thus displayed his absolute power; the man upon hearing whose name powerful kings and rulers trembled, now humbles himself before such a woman as ‘A’ishah and politely begs her permission to choose his eternal resting-place. He makes her house the site for the meeting of the council to decide the question of the caliphate and the powerful rule of Islam and Muslims, thereby gaining greater honour and credit in the eyes of the world of Islam to her house and her person, and through a typical act of opportunism reinforced her rank and position in the hearts of the Muslims and Islamic society even in the last moments of his life.

So, in this and many other ways, ‘Umar during his rule, gave such a distinction to ‘A’ishah over her equals and other Muslims that it made the Islamic society subordinate to the glory and

greatness of this lady, thereby giving her such a power with which she was able to rise in combat against the two succeeding caliphs and oppose them.

Indeed she went so far in her opposition to ‘Uthman and ‘Ali the two sons-in-law of the Prophet, that she incited the Muslims to shed their blood, whereas both of them were the Prophet’s companions and caliphs of the Muslims, and were considered as the Prophet’s successors. With the power and influence which she had gained, she was able to engage daringly and with a surprising insolence in such great tasks and similar ventures, and in the same way that she had acted after the Prophet’s death, she managed once again to use her genius and intelligence in determining the course of the history of Islam, and play a most sensitive role in it.

A summary of the previous account

As the government of the time relied on A’ishah’s verdict and instructions and increased her pension, her name was given precedence over the names of other wives of the Prophet.

Text of the book

From the previous account we may sum it up that since the government of the time (especially during the rule of the elder caliphs) received instructions and verdicts from ‘A’ishah and granted her a higher pension than the other ladies of the prophet, her name was mentioned above them and very often re was no mention of their names at all. The reason was that the caliph paid much attention to her, and this attitude paved the way for her to attain her goals and carry’ out her inherent ambitions. Thus she gained a high position in the Islamic society down to the present day.

There was one exception, namely that she was not allowed e the other ladies of the Prophet and his companions) to have Medina, and consequently she could associate with none it the Prophet’s aides. Therefore, there arose no occasion to

discuss many of the Prophet's traditions, since most of her contemporaries, especially the Medinans, had the chance of direct contact with the Prophet, with the result that her traditions, like those of others during the rule of the two elder caliphs, are very scanty, probably no more than a few scores in number. It is also likely that this very number, narrated by her during this period, comprised the same traditions which were 'related to endorsing the position of 'Umar and her father, as caliphs, in which there is no when during her whole life, she was one of the staunchest supporters of the rule of the two elders. Moreover, her traditions about the excellence of Abu Bakr and 'Umar are not confined to their reigns, since after their death as compared with their life-time, she has narrated many traditions concerning their virtues and qualities.

We saw also that at the end of this period, 'Umar, who was highly regarded by the Prophet's intimate companions and respected by the rulers of the time for his power, and was obeyed by various nations, showed such a reverence and honor to her that he obtained her permission to make her house the venue of the council, and her agreement to make the Prophet's house his own eternal dwelling.

For those reasons he granted her out of the public fund a larger amount of pension than what was given to the other wives of the Prophet. On various occasions, too, she was consulted by him about the Prophet's methods and traditions and asked for instructions. He regarded her as the only great personality and commander in the world of Islam next to himself. It was through this same power and influence that she was able to face the next two caliphs, rouse the people to kill them and assume a leading role in determining the course of Islamic history.

Part Three
'A'ishah in the time of 'Uthman's rule

Who was 'Uthman?

Abu 'Abd Allah and Abu 'Amr 'Uthman was the son of 'Affan, and grandson of Abu al-'As ibn Umayyah al-Qurayshi. His mother was Arwa, daughter of Kurayz ibn Rabi'ah ibn 'Abd Shams, while Arwa's mother was al-Bayda', daughter of 'Abd al Muttalib the Prophet's aunt.(121)

`Uthman was from the group of men who were the first in embracing Islam. He married Ruqayyah, daughter of the Prophet and emigrated with her to Abyssinia, and after his return from there, went over to Medina.

'Uthman did not take part in the battle of Badr on the excuse of nursing his sick wife, Ruqayyah, and when she died, he married Umm Kulthum, another daughter of the Prophet. She, too, died while her father was alive. 'Uthman did not have any children from the Prophet's daughters.

When 'Umar was wounded by Abu Lu'lu'ah Firuz slave of al-Mughayrah, he on his death bed nominated 'Uthman as one of the six members of the council, but made the final choice of the caliph subject to the agreement of 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf who was also on the six-member council.

Speaking in such a council, 'Abd ar-Rahman stated: "I will forego my being chosen as caliph or the condition that you accept my nominee." When they agreed to this proposal, he too declared that for assuming the position of caliph, one must act upon the Book of God, the Prophet's tradition and policy of Abu Bakr and 'Umar. He made this offer first to 'All, but 'All refused e last of the conditions.(122) Consequently, 'Abd ar-Rahman and after him the council members pledged allegiance to

‘Uthman on Saturday, first of Muharram, 24th year after Hijrah, three days after the burial of ‘Umar, since ‘Uthman had accepted all the conditions laid down by ‘Abd ar-Rahman.

‘Uthman became caliph and ruled for twelve years. The period of ‘Uthman’s rule can be divided into two parts: the period of confirmation and support, and the period of wrath and rebellion. It was that same wrath and rebellion as well as people’s uprising against the confusion in the country and the selfishness of ‘Uthman’s companions, most of whom were the Umayyads, which caused ‘Uthman’s overthrow and death, and made the assassination of the caliph something simple and feasible.

As we said in our account of ‘A’ishah in people’s uprising against ‘Uthman and his assassination by the rebels, Aishah played a very effective role.

There is a difference of opinion about the date of ‘Uthman’s death, and it is stated to have occurred between 12th and 28th of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah of the year 35 AH. His age, too, at the time of his death is stated to have been between 82 and 92.

His body was buried after three days outside the al-Baqi’ cemetery in a place called Hash Kawkab, which was the Jews’ cemetery, surrounded by four walls. When Mu’awiyah became caliph, he ordered the demolition of the walls, and thus ‘Uthman’s grave came to be included among the Muslims’ graves in al-Baqj’ cemetery.

‘A’ishah and ‘Uthman the period of confirmation and support

‘A’ishah, like other chiefs of Quraysh, rose up to support ’Uthman’s caliphate

Text of the book

The initial years of ‘Uthman’s rule were similar to those of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, and ‘A’ishah thought that she would continue; as in the past, to enjoy the respect shown to her by ‘Uthman as the next caliph to receive advantages above other wives of the Prophet, and constantly have a free hand in the settlement of

affairs. It was owing to these expectations that ‘A’ishah, like other Quraysh chiefs, decided to support ‘Uthman, and by issuing some traditions about ‘Uthman gave him the benefit of her unsparing support and also to his caliphate for six years.

The traditions which are narrated from ‘A’ishah in praise and eulogy of ‘Uthman with no mention being made of his death, belong, in all probability, to this short period namely the period of her support of ‘Uthman.

Here we give examples of such traditions as quoted by Musnad of Ahmad:

‘A’ishah said: " The Prophet and I were lying down under the same cloak when Abu Bakr arrived and asked permission to enter. The Prophet, remaining where he was, gave him permission to come in, and after fulfilling his wish, Abu Bakr left the room. After Abu Bakr, ‘Umar asked permission to meet the Prophet, and he too was admitted to his presence in the same way, and then dispatched after meeting his wish. Then ‘Uthman arrived and asked to meet. This time the Prophet rose and after arranging his dress admitted him. After attending to his affair the Prophet let him leave. At this time, I said to the Prophet: ‘When Abu Bakr and ‘Umar came in, you received them without changing your position, but on ‘Uthman’s arrival you arranged your garment as if you felt shy of him.’ He answered: ‘You see, ‘Uthman is a shy and modest fellow. I feared that if he saw me in that condition, his shyness would prevent him from stating his wish.’"

According to another narration [123] ‘A’ishah says: "The was lying down in bed and had covered himself up with
cloak. When ‘Uthman begged Leave to meet him, he told me cover myself up. I said: ‘O Prophet of God! -You did not get nervous at the arrival of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. How is it, Len, you prepare yourself so carefully and arrange your clothes in order to receive ‘Uthman?’ He said: ‘O ‘A’ishah! [124] Why I not show respect to him when, I swear to God, angels respectful to him in his presence?’"

In our opinion, the narration and publication of this tradition date back to the time of ‘Uthman’s caliphate, since as we have stated in this tradition the names of the three above caliphs are mentioned in the order of their assumption of power

and this may assure us that the date of the above tradition was subsequent to the rule of the two elder caliphs and assumption of power by 'Uthman.

It shows also that the above tradition must have been narrated before the commencement of differences between 'A'ishah and 'Uthman, and her disaffection with him, and before his assassination and quite a long time before her decision to kill him; for, otherwise in this tradition, like other similar traditions narrated about 'Uthman his assassination would have been mentioned.

In addition to what has already been said, the points that create considerable doubt in this tradition are:

1-As the Prophet himself was a symbol of Etiquette and politeness and greatest teacher, how can he admit Abu Bakr and 'Umar, while in a restful position under a cloak with his wife without a feeling of shyness and modesty, whereas on the arrival of 'Uthman, he hastily dresses himself and tells 'A'ishah to do so too?

2-Moreover, why should the Prophet resort to discrimination between the above three leading companions of his, and how is it that the angels feel shy of 'Uthman alone?

The period of wrath and rebellion

'A'ishah was the first to rise against 'Uthman and take over the leadership of his opponents till he was killed.

Historians

In the first half of 'Uthman's rule 'A'ishah supported him and always showed obedience to him without fail. Even when she and the other wives of the Prophet intended to make a Hajj pilgrimage, first she asked his permission. In this connection, she says: "When 'Umar passed away and 'Uthman held the rein of affairs, I, Umm Salamah, Maymunah and Umm Habibah sent someone to ask him leave for Hajj pilgrimage." 'Uthman sent this answer: "You remember the way of 'Umar. Like him, I will take you with me to the pilgrimage. So I am ready to take

with me any of you, ladies of the Prophet, wishing to undertake a Hajj pilgrimage."

'Uthman fulfilled his promise and took us to this Hajj pilgrimage except Zaynab who had died in 'Umar's time and had not accompanied him on pilgrimage, while Sudah, daughter of Zam'ah and we were veiled from public eyes. [125]

In that year 'Uthman accompanied these ladies to Mecca and entrusted their protection to 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf and Sa'd ibn Zayd.

But this atmosphere of amity did not last long, and with the passage of time, differences arose between 'A'ishah and 'Uthman, with the result that 'Uthman deducted from her pension the two thousand dinars which 'Umar had added to it. al-Ya'qubi says in his history[126]: "An umbrage occurred between 'A'ishah and 'Uthman and he deducted from her pension the two thousand dinars which 'Umar had added as a privilege over the other wives of the Prophet and put her salary on the same scale as theirs."

We do not know the exact date of the commencement of the dispute, but we know only that it ensued in the second half of 'Uthman's rule. We know also that it was not a sudden incident, but was something gradual, which was intensified until the split between them, became very deep.

We know also that 'A'ishah was the first person to show open opposition to 'Uthman and gather the dissidents to the hate around her and act as their leader until the caliph killed.[127] It is also certain that when the tension and opposition to 'Uthman and people's uprising against him were at their height, the hostility of no tribe and Muslim family of was as intense towards 'Uthman as that of the Taym which the family of Abu Bakr belonged.

Among the matters which increasingly kindled the[128] flame of dispute between 'A'ishah and 'Uthman and made hostility more evident and public, was the subject of al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah, half-brother of 'Uthman, and Ibn Mas'ud Sahabi, a chaste and popular man, each of whom we will deal with separately.

al-Waljd ibn ‘Uqbah
and governorship of Kufah

We see that in the Qur’an, al-Walid ibn ‘Uqbah has been introduced as a wicked man who was notorious for winebibbing and obscene acts.

Text of the book

We said that ‘Uthman on his assumption of power, was supported by ‘A’ishah and for six years he benefited from this support of the lady of early Islam, and spared no effort in showing respect and honor to her. But as time went by, difference arose between them and they began forming factions and fronts.

‘A’ishah, in order to show ‘Uthman her power and influence with people, made use of every possible occasion to rouse people’s antagonism towards him. This hostility reached such a point where these two figures were ready to make attempts on one another’s life.

‘Uthman appointed al-Walid, his sinning. Debauchee and winebibbing half-brother, as governor of Kufah, an act which obviously caused this man’s confrontations with the people of Kufah and created pretexts for ‘A’ishah to attack ‘Uthman. We will now look through the history and earlier centuries to give an idea of that period, the deeds of al-Walid, the people’s reactions and ‘A’ishah’s attitude and steps.

al-Walid was the son of ‘Uqbah and grandson of Abu Mu’ayt ibn Abi ‘Amr, called Dhakwan. Dhakwan was a paid slave of Umayyah ibn ‘Abd Shams who adopted him as son. al-Walid’s mother, Arwa, was the daughter of Kurayz ibn Rabi’ah, ‘Uthman’s mother. Thus al-Walid became ‘Uthman’s brother on his mother’s side. ‘Uqbah, al-Walid’s father was a neighbor of the Prophet in Mecca and at the beginning of the Prophet’s ordainment, he frequented his sessions.

One day ‘A’ishah had invited a number of guests to his house and had asked the Prophet, too, to attend this feast. The Prophet accepted the invitation, but abstained from eating anything except on the condition that ‘Uqbah express faith in

the Unique God.

'Uqbah agreed to do so and thus embraced Islam. When the Qurayshis learnt of this matter, they said: 'Uqbah has abandoned the faith of his ancestors."

'Uqbah had a friend who was not present in Mecca at that time, being on a journey to ash-Sham. On his return one night he asked his wife: "How are Muhammad and his claims?"

She answered: "He is persevering getting on.

-"What is my friend 'Uqbah doing?"

-"He, too, has given up his ancestors' faith and accepted Muhammad's religion."

'Uqbah's friend (129) became very uneasy on hearing this and spent an uncomfortable night. Next morning when 'Uqbah came to see him and greeted him, he did not look at him and remained silent.

'Uqbah asked: "Why do you not return my greeting?"

-"How can I do so when you have abandoned your religion?"

-"Have Quraysh, too, made such a supposition about me?"

-'Yes."

-"What can I do to change their opinion about me?"

-"It's very simple. You can enter Muhammad's session, spit on his face and insult him with the worst of abuses."

'Uqbah acted upon his friend's suggestion and did what he should not have done. The Prophet showed no reaction to 'Uqbah's misconduct, and only Wiped his face, and turning to 'Uqbah said: "If I ever get hold of you outside Mecca, I will cut off your head!"

According to another narration, the conversation between 'Uqbah and his friend was as follows:

-"Uqbah! Have you abandoned your ancestors' faith?"

-"No! It is not so. One day Muhammad was a guest in my house and swore that if did not embrace Islam, he would not touch my food. I felt embarrassed and to please him I uttered the words testifying the belief in God. But I did not do it in seriousness and sincerity."

-"I won't look at you again unless you spit on Muhammad's face and kick and slap him, thus showing your dislike of him."

'Uqbah saw the Prophet prostrating in Dar an-Nudwah and. carried out his friend's suggestion in full. The Prophet said to

him: “If I ever see you outside Mecca, I will cut off your head.”

From that time onward, ‘Uqbah became one of the most headstrong enemies of the Prophet and went so far as to get hold of a sheep’s tripe and throw its filthy contents on the Prophet’s head.(130)

When the battle of Badr began, and ‘Uqbah’s friends hastened to join the infidels in the fight with the Prophet, they proposed to him, too, to join them in the combat, but he excused himself, saying: “I fear this man since he warned me that if he ever found me outside Mecca, he would cut off my head.” His friends said: “You have a red-haired camel under you, and if we happen to be defeated and are to retreat, you can easily flee and save yourself.’ They kept on persuading him until he agreed to join them, and he took part in the battle. When the battle started the Muslims with divine aid inflicted a severe defeat on the infidels. At that time in a stampede ‘Uqbah’s camel shied off and carried him to an open desert. The Muslims arrived and took him and seventy others captive. When they brought him to the Prophet, he looked at ‘Uqbah and ordered to kill him. When ‘Uqbah heard this order, he cried out madly: “Why do you want to kill me alone out of so many captives?” The Prophet said:

“Your guilt is cardinal. You are to be killed because you showed infidelity to God and His prophet and committed injustice.” Then he ordered ‘Ali to cut his head off.

The following verse has descended about him:

“And the day when the unjust shall bite his hands, saying. O! would that I had taken away with the Apostle; 0 woe is me! would that I had not taken such a one for a friend! Certainly he led me astray from the reminder after it had come to me, and the Satan foils to aid man. “(131)

The Qur’an introduces al-Walid

al-Walid is the son of the same ‘Uqbah. On the day that Mecca was captured by the Muslims and the Prophet and when there was no escape for the infidels and those who had gone astray, he embraced Islam, and after some time, the Prophet sent him to the tribe of Banu al-Mustalaq to collect religious tithe.

al-Walid returned a little while later to report that the members of that tribe had turned apostate and refused to pay

tithe. The reason for making such a report was that a group of people of that tribe, on hearing of al-Walid's arrival had come out to meet and welcome the Prophet's envoy. But al-Walid seemed to have taken this gathering as a plot against himself and was so frightened that without facing or talking to them, he hurried back to Medina and gave that false report.

The Prophet ordered Khalid ibn al-Walid to go to that tribe and after investigating the truth to make a report. He insisted that Khalid should not be hasty and see to the matter quietly and with all possible care.

Khalid said in his report that the said tribe were Muslims and had by no means become apostate. At this time the following verse descended showing al-Walid to be an evil-doer:

"O you who believe! if an evil-doer comes to you with a report, look carefully into it' lest you harm a people in ignorance then be sorry for what you have done. (132)

Now 'Uthman, caliph of the Muslims who considered himself successor to the Prophet, appointed such a notorious evil-doer as governor of Kufah simply on account of his kinship with him, and removed from that position Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas, former commander-in-chief of 'Umar's army, whereas Sa'd had, in 'Umar's time and upon his order, built Kufah, turning it into a frontier garrison, and had housed there the soldiers who had accompanied him in the war against Iran. The people of Kufah had a deep respect for Sa'd.

An evil-doer as a governor

When al-Walid entered Kufah and Sa'd learnt of his mission, he turned to him and said in surprise:

"We have been away from one another. It seems that despite stupidity in the past, you have become somewhat intelligent and acquired competence, while in fact it is we who have become stupid and ignorant."

al-Walid answered: "Sa'd! Don't get angry! It is this government and monarchy that passes like a ball into different hands."

Sa'd answered with conviction: 'Yes, I see that you will soon it into a monarchy."(133)

The people of Kufah were angry at this change of governor

and protested, saying: "'Uthman has chosen a bad successor to Sa'd ibn Waqqas."

Abu al-Faraj in al-Aghani describes the rule of al-Walid as stated by Khalid ibn Sa'id as follows: al-'Abbas ibn 'Abd al Muttalib Abu Sufyan, al-Hakam ibn 'Abi al-'As and al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah were the only people who had the privilege of sitting next to him or in his seat."

One day, as usual, al-Walid was sitting with the caliph, when al-Hakam, 'Uthman's uncle, arrived. 'Uthman rose in respect, offered his seat to him and took another seat himself. 'Uthman's gesture towards al-Hakam vexed al-Walid very much, but he said nothing. After al-Hakam's departure, he turned to 'Uthman and said: "0 commander of the faithful! When you showed preference to your uncle over me, I was reminded of these couplets." 'Uthman answered: "al-Hakam is after all a great man of the Quraysh and it is incumbent upon us to show him respect. What are your couplets?" al-Walid recited the following couplets:

"I noticed he held his uncle dearer than his brother, whereas this is an innovation and was not customary before. When I saw this, I longed to see 'Umar and Khalid ('Uthman's sons) grow up and call me uncle on resurrection day."

'Uthman felt sorry for him by virtue of these couplets and in order to cause no umbrage with his half-brother, he gave him a share in his government and said: "We offer you the governorship of Iraq!"

Thus, a notorious fellow, whom God has called "an evil-doer" in His heavenly Book, was given the power to govern the life, honour and religion of the Muslims and act as an absolute ruler.

al-Hakam, the caliph's uncle

Let us see who al-Hakam is and what is his position that produces so much respect for him on the part of 'Uthman, caliph of the Muslims. He was the son of Abu al-'As, 'Uthman's uncle, and a grandson of Umayyah ibn 'Abd Shams al-Qurayshj. alBaladhuri says in 5/27: In pagan times al-Hakam was a neighbor of the Prophet and after the ordainment he did more than all other neighbors to molest the Prophet.

al-Hakam embraced Islam after the capture of Mecca and

settled in Medina. But the Muslims regarded him to be weak and lax in religion; for, though he had apparently embraced Islam, he walked behind the Prophet mimicking his footsteps and making faces about him. In prayer, he used his hands and fingers to perform comic gestures.

One day the Prophet happened to notice his mimicry and comic gestures, and was vexed at it, and turning to him said imperiously: "Stay as you are!" As a result of this curse, he remained in that comic state from that moment to the end of his life, and his mouth, head and hands kept on shaking nauseatingly all the time.

The Muslims were right in doubting al-Hakam's faith, since, despite this strange and comic appearance which was due to the Prophet's curse, he did not abandon molesting the Prophet, and one day when the Prophet had stayed in the house of one of his ladies, al-Hakam stealthily peered inside through a crack in the door. The Prophet recognized him and came out with a stick and said: "Who will save me from this filthy lizard?" Then he added: 'He and his offspring's must not live in the same city as me' and exiled them to at-Ta'if.

After the Prophet breathed his last, 'Uthman interceded for his uncle, al-Hakam and asked Abu Bakr to let him and his children return to Medina. Abu Bakr refused permission and said: "I dare not allow those who have been exiled by the Prophet to return to Medina."

When 'Umar became caliph, 'Uthman renewed his request, but he met with a similar refusal. But when 'Uthman because caliph, he brought back al-Hakam and his offspring's to Medina, saying: "I had interceded with the Prophet to allow their return to Medina and he had given a favorable promise. However, wing to his death it was not fulfilled."

The Muslims were not pleased with the return to Medina of those exiled by the Prophet. al-Baladhuri says on p. 5/22: "al-Hakam exposed the Prophet's secrets. The Prophet laid a curse on him and exiled him and his children to at-Ta'if saying that he should not stay in the same city as himself." al-Hakam and children remained in exile there until 'Uthman became and he brought them back to Medina. al-Baladhuri says 28: "The Muslims were very angry at the act of 'Uthman in

granting to al-Hakam the whole of tithe revenue amounting to 300,000 dinars which the latter bad collected from the Khuza'ah tribe. He says on p. 27: "al-Hakam died during 'Uthman's rule and the caliph performed the burial prayer for him and pitched a tent over his grave as a sign of respect. This was al-Hakam the notorious fellow to whom 'Uthman offered his seat and sat below him."

Events which befell Ibn Mas'ud

> *I appoint 'Ammar ibn Yasir as your governor; and 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud as minister of state for your religious affairs, and remember especially that with the dispatch of 'Abd Allah Mas'ud I have given the people of Kufah preference over myself.*
>
> ***'Umar, in a Lear to the people** of **Kufah***

Abu 'Abd ar-Rahman 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud al-Hadhali was the son of Mas'ud who was allied with the Banu Zuhrah tribe, and was a Muslim of early Islam. At that time no one dared to recite the Qur'an aloud, but he did so and with an audible voice he carried the divine words to the negligent ears of the infidels. The Quraysh did not leave Ibn Mas'ud's insolence without retaliation, and beat him so severely that he got badly hurt and was covered with blood. The Prophet took care of him, and Ibn Mas'ud willingly accepted to serve him. He was so privileged as to be allowed to hear the Prophet's voice.

Ibn Mas'ud always served the Prophet and never left him. He placed the Prophet's shoes before him and helped him put them on. He walked with the Prophet, sometimes in front of him, to shield him against any probable danger. When the Prophet washed himself, he held up a sheet to screen him from others' eyes. When the Prophet slept, Ibn Mas'ud kept watch, and also awakened him from sleep when necessary.

Ibn Mas'ud emigrated to Abyssinia and Medina and took part in the battle of Badr and also in the subsequent combats. The account of his life after the Prophet's death is as follows:(134)

'Umar sent him and 'Ammar ibn Yasir to Kufah and

dispatched the following letter to the people of that city: "I have appointed and sent 'Ammar ibn Yasir to you as your governor and 'Abd Allah ibn Mas'ud as your adviser and teacher in religious matters. They are two of the select companions of the Prophet and participants in the battle of Badr. Follow and obey them heartily, and remember especially that in sending Ibn Mas'ud I have given you preference over myself."

In Kufah, Ibn Mas'ud taught the Qur'an to people, acquainted them with religious matters and also acted as treasurer of the public fund.

In 'Uthman's rule al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah, his foster brother, was appointed as governor of Kufah When he arrived and assumed control of affairs, he came finally in direct contact with Ibn Mas'ud.

In the past, it had been customary for a governor, during his mission to borrow money for a fixed period from the public fund and repay it in due time. al-Walid, too, applied for such a loan, and Ibn Mas'ud extended it to him. On the due date he asked alWalid for repayment and insisted upon it. But al-Walid unable to tolerate this impudence on the part of Ibn Mas'ud, wrote to 'Uthman and asked his aid in this involvement with Ibn Mas'ud. 'Uthman wrote the following note to Ibn Mas'ud: "Your job is to act as our treasurer, but you have no authority to interfere and call al-Walid to account for any sum that he draws on the public fund!" When Ibn Mas'ud received this note and realized that he could no longer accept such an important responsibility, and harmonize himself with 'Uthman's methods, he threw down the keys of the treasury before al-Walid and said: "I had supposed till now that I was a keeper of Muslims' assets. But I have no wish to be your treasurer and I resign from this post." (135) After his resignation as treasurer, he stayed in Kufah for some time.

Concerning the same story the book "al-'Iqd a1-farid says Ibn Mas'ud addressed the Muslims in the Kufah mosque, in these words: "O people of Kufah! Know that tonight your public fund is reduced by 100,000 and gone, without any instruction being issued by the commander of the Faithful to divest me of the responsibility." al-Walid reported these words 'Uthman and he dismissed Ibn Mas'ud.(136) al-Baladhuri

writes in Ansab al-ashraf [137]: When Ibn Mas'ud threw down the keys of the treasury before al-Walid, he exclaimed angrily: Whoever changes God's command at his own wish, will lose his hereafter, and whoever does so at his own whim, will be faced with God's wrath. I see that 'Uthman has done so. Is it right to remove such a governor as Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas from Kufah and replace him with al-Walid?'

Ibn Mas'ud often used to say: "The best words are those of the Qur'an, the best path is the one shown by the Prophet, and the worst deed is heresy since every heresy is deviation that ends in hell."[138]

al-Walid also reported these stinging words of Ibn Mas'ud to 'Uthman and added that he slandered the caliph and abused him. 'Uthman summoned Ibn Mas'ud to Medina. When the people of Kufah learnt of his recall to the capital, they gathered round him asking him not to go but to stay with them to remain immune from any possible injury. Ibn Mas'ud said: 'He has the right of being obeyed, and I have no wish to be the first person to open the door to riot and sedition upon him and disobey him.[139]

al-Isti'ab gives Ibn Mas'ud's answer to the people of Kufah as follows: "These conditions are bound to produce riot and sedition, and I have no desire to start a riot."

The people of Kufah saw him off and he advised them to be chaste and act upon God's injunctions and then asked them to return home before his departure. The people praised him for his goodness, and on his leaving for Medina, they thanked him for his efforts and services, saying: "May God reward you! You familiarized our ignorant ones with religion, and made our wise ones more steadfast in faith. You taught us the Qur'an, informed us of the Islamic faith and made us clear-sighted about religion. You were indeed a good Muslim, a fine friend and a kind brother." Then saying farewell, they returned home [140]

When Ibn Mas'ud arrived at Medina, he went straight to the Prophet's mosque where 'Uthman was at that moment giving a sermon while standing on the Prophet's pulpit. When he saw Ibn Mas'ud he changed his words and said: "Just now a mean and worthless quadruped has entered upon you, a fellow who on

people's stretching their hands for bread, will vomit what he has eaten and throw it out of his belly."

In answer to this abuse, Ibn Mas'ud said: "No, 'Uthman I am not such a man! I am one of the Prophet's companions with the honor of being present in the battle of Badr and Pledge of ar-Ridwan (Good pleasure)."(141)

'A'ishah, too, exclaimed: "O 'Uthman! Are you using such words about Ibn Mas'ud who has been an intimate companion of the Prophet?"

In answer to her, 'Uthman shouted: "Be silent", and then ordered to expel Ibn Mas'ud from the mosque. They carried out the caliph's order with Shocking insults to Ibn Mas'ud. 'Abd Allah ibn Zam'ah knocked him down, and it is said that Yahmun 'Uthman's slave, got between Ibn Mas'ud's legs, lifted him and threw him down so violently that his ribs were broken. At this time 'ali who was witnessing this scene, turned to 'Uthman and said: "O 'Uthman! Do you act in this way only on the words and reports of al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah towards a companion of the Prophet?"

'Uthman answered: "No! It is not only because of al-walid's words! I had also sent Zubayd ibn as-Salt Kindi to Kufah for investigation." Ibn Mas'ud who was twisting with agony, cried out: " 'Uthman's blood is lawful" and 'Ali said in answer to 'Uthman: "And you have relied on Zubayd's words who is not trustworthy!" Then he rose to aid Ibn Mas'ud and took him home for treatment.

After this incident, Ibn Mas'ud stayed in Medina and 'Uthman did not permit him to leave that city. Even when he was cured from his injury, he asked leave to participate in the holy war against the Romans, but 'Uthman refused permission. It is also narrated that before 'Uthman could give a positive or negative answer, Marwan anticipated it and said to 'Uthman:

"He has roused Iraq against you and made them suspicious of you. Now it is ash-Sham's turn and he intends to rouse the people there against you!"

Thus to the end of his life, Ibn Mas'ud was unable to leave medina and a watch was kept over him until his death two ears before 'Uthman's assassination. On this occasion Ibn Mas'ud's stay in Medina lasted three years.

The final conversation between ‘Uthman and Ibn Mas’ud is worthy of attention. When Ibn Mas’ud was ill in bed and passing through the last moments of his life, ‘Uthman came to visit his sick-bed and said:

-What are you suffering from?

-From my sins.

-What would you like?

-God’s favor and forgiveness.

-Shall I call a doctor for you?

-The doctor himself has made me sick.

-Shall I order to pay your salary and pension? [142]

-You did not pay it when I needed it Do you want to do so today when I have no need for it?

-It will remain for your children.

-God will provide for their livelihood.

-Beg God to forgive me for what I have done.

-I beg God to seize my right from you.

Ibn Mas’ud had willed that ‘Ammar ibn Yasir should perform his burial prayer, and that ‘Uthman should not attend his burial. His will was carried out and he was buried in al-Baqi’ without ‘Uthman’s knowledge.[143]

When ‘Uthman heard of it, he got very angry and asked why he was buried without his knowledge. ‘Ammar said: “He had willed that you should not perform his burial prayer.” ‘Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr composed a couplet on this occasion, meaning: “I know that you will lament my death whereas you had cut off my bread and food.”

This was an account of Ibn Mas’ud.[144] But al-Walid’s rule did not result in the story of Ibn Mas’ud alone. During his rule he committed many mischievous and seditious acts such as his ill-treatment of Abu Zubayd, a Christian poet, and of a Jewish magician.

Playing with fire

al- Walid arranged for his Christian companion a monthly share of the Muslims' public fund, including wine and pork.

Ansab al-ashraf of al-Baladhuri

Protecting a winebibbing companion

Abu al-Faraj narrates in the book "al-Aghani", quoting Ibn al-A'rabi as follows: When al-Walid was appointed by his brother, 'Uthman, as governor of Kufah, Abu Zubayd, a Christian poet, joined him. al-Walid provided him with a house belonging to 'Aqil ibn Abi_Talib and granted it to him. This offer of the house to a Christian, addicted to wine, prompted the Muslims of Kufah for the first time ever to speak ill of and criticize al Walid, since this Christian entered the mosque in order to meet al-Walid and accompany him to his house to engage in nightly revelry and drinking, and while tottering and drunken, he passed through the mosque to return home.

al-Walid's conduct clearly showed his carelessness towards religious affairs and his indifference towards the people's feelings and beliefs. At a time when he was expected to abandon wine drinking and check the acts of Abu Zubayd, his companion, which were against religious laws and common usage, he on the contrary granted this Christian the vast lands situated between the red palaces of ash-Sham and Hira and made those lands a pasture for his flock and cattle, forbidding others to use them. In return, for this favour Abu Zubayd composed a poem in his praise.(145)

al-Baladhuri writes: al-Walid arranged for his Christian companion a monthly allowance from the Muslims' public fund -including wine and pork. His intimate friends reminded him such an act would antagonize people towards him. consequently, he stopped the allowance of wine and pork and ordered to pay him their price every month in addition his salary. This governor of Kufah allowed a Christian to enter a Muslims' mosque.(146)

Another wrong act of al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah resulted in making people cynical about 'Uthman's government and his protégé,

since he had allowed his Jewish clown to engage in jugglery in the mosque of Kufah in order to amuse the governor and his cavaliers.

One of his shows in a dark night was to exhibit a big elephant sitting on horseback. Another item was that the juggler turned himself into a camel walking on a rope. Next time he showed a donkey through whose mouth he entered and emerged through arsehole. In conclusion, he summoned a spectator and fearlessly cut off his head with a sword, and to the people's amazement he once more drew the sword across him with the man rising again safe and sound.

Jundab, son of Ka'b, was present among the spectators in the mosque watching these scenes and acts of the Jewish juggler. He constantly prayed for God's protection from Satan and perversion and such acts which make a human being forget Allah. He knew that all this amounted to dexterity and sleight of hand which are strongly forbidden in Islam. So he could bear it no longer and drawing his sword cut off the Jew's head with one blow and shouted: "Right has prevailed over wrong; for, wrong is undoubtedly destructible!" It is also said that all this happened in day time, and Jundab who had no sword with him, went to a shop and got a sword from a sword-maker to return and kill the juggler, saying: "Now, if you are truthful, bring yourself back to life!"

Anyhow it was al-Walid who turned the chaste and holy site of the Kufah mosque, which was a place of worship and benediction, into a scene of juggling by a Jew, and it was Jundab who by killing the same juggler ruined the means amusement of the debauchee governor, the protege' of 'Uthman.

al-Walid who was extremely enraged by Jundab's action, ordered to kill him in revenge for the death of Zurarah, the Jew. But his family, from al-Azd tribe, rose in support of him to prevent his death. But al-Walid in slyness condoned the death order into imprisonment, hoping to kill him secretly. Jundab was sent to prison and Dinar was placed as warden over him. When Dinar learnt of the reason for his imprisonment and noticed his religious devotion and faith, and, that he was engaged in prayer all night, he had no wish to shed his blood, so he said to him:

-I will open the door and you can save your skin by escaping.

-If I do so, a1-Walid will kill you instead.

-My blood is no worth if it is shed in the way of God and in' saving one of the devotees.

At last on the insistence of the warden, Jundab left the prison and took to flight.

In the morning when al-Walid found himself free from the meddlesome tribe of al-Azd and others, he prepared himself for killing Jundab and summoned him. His servants came back to report his escape. Dinar, too confirmed this report. al-Walid who was greatly enraged at Jundab's flight and laxity of the warden, ordered to behead him[141] and hang his body at the sewer of Kufah.[148]

After his escape from prison, Jundab secretly left Kufah and reached Medina where he settled down until 'Ali ibn Abi_Talib mediated for him with 'Uthman. 'Uthman accepted his intercession and wrote to al-Walid telling him not to harass Jundab. Thus Jundab was once more able to return to Kufah.[149]

The first sparks of revolution

As al-Walid's wicked and unlawful deeds as governor of Kufah reached their peak, 'Uthman's wrong conduct and reactions, which had caused discontent among the people, were mentioned and reported by everyone. 'Amr ibn Zurarah. son of Qays an-Nakha'i and Kumayl ibn Ziyad an-Nakha'i who were two of the well-known men of Kufah, were among the first of those who brought up the subject of overthrow of 'Uthman and election of Ali ibn Abi Talib as caliph. 'Amr gathered the people and said to them: "O people! Though 'Uthman knows well the difference between right and wrong, he has deliberately ignored this matter, and placed low and unworthy individuals as guardian over the life and property of your good people and given them power and authority."

Khalid ibn 'Arfatah, who was present among the audience,

hurriedly went to al-Walid and reported the gathering of people and ‘Amr’s inciting words. al-Walid was enraged and rode to face the people and disperse them. But this companions stopped him and pointed out that the matter was more serious than he supposed; for, the people were angry and ready to riot and rise, warning him not to fan up the flame of sedition. Meanwhile, Malik son of al-Harith, suggested that with al-Walid’s approval he would make the people quiet. al-Walid agreed and Malik went to the crowd, warned them of riot and rebellion and dispersed them peacefully. al-Walid immediately wrote a letter to ‘Uthman about Amr ibn Zurarah’s action and words and asked for instructions to get rid of him. ‘Uthman wrote in answer: “This Ibn Zurarah is a mischievous Bedouin and you must exile him to ash-Sham.” al-Walid carried out the order and exiled ‘Amr to ash-Sham.(150) On Amr’s forced departure from Kufah on the charge of seeking justice and truth, he was seen off by Malik al-Ashtar, al-Aswad ibn Yazid, ‘Alqamah ibn Qays and Qays ibn Fahdan, Qays composed this poem to show his sympathy towards ‘Amr: “I swear to God, to the God of Ka’bah that in all my deeds whether secret or open I seek God’s consent. We will indeed overthrow al-Walid and his master, ‘Uthman, who is a shelter for deviation, from their positions as governor and caliph.”

‘Uthman’s inspector in Kufah

When ‘Uthman received numerous complaints from various sections of Kufans about al-Walid’s conduct, he was forced, at least in appearance, to show some reaction to these protests. So he sent Hamran, his freed slave, as inspector to Kufah to survey the situation there and report on al-Walid’s treatment of people. But al-Walid bought this top official of the government with money, and by offering him bribes sent him back to Medina empty-handed. Hamran returned, and in harmony with the real wish of ‘Uthman prepared a report in praise of al-Walid’s conduct. So ‘Uthman was relieved and felt no more anxiety.

After some time Marwan(151) met Hamran and asked him the truth about al-Walid. Hamran answered: “The situation is very critical.” Marwan reported the facts to ‘Uthman who exiled Hamran to Basra for his false report and treason, and gave him

a house to live in there.[152]

The winebibber ruler of Muslims

al-Walid spent the whole night drinking wine with his companions, minstrels and musicians.

History of al-Mas'udi

al-Walid's rule in Kufah lasted five years during which he fought the pagans in the region of Azerbaijan. But as he was not a true believer, in that critical situation he committed an act, which deserved religious punishment. The leaders came together to see to the execution of punishment in his case, but Hudhayfah opposed this, saying that as a commander of the Islamic army this would not be right, and so they desisted from such an action.[153]

I do not know why al-Walid deserved the punishment, whether it was because of drinking wine or any other offense. But it is certain that he constantly drank wine, and went so far in it that according to all the historians, the related punishment was eventually carried out in his case.

Abu al-Faraj writes in al-Aghani: "al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah was a winebibbing adulterer. One morning he came drunken to the mosque to offer prayer along with the people and instead of offering two units, he performed four. During the prayer he sang out this phrase: "The heart is mortgaged to the ringlets of Rubab, while no trace remains of the youthfulness of either of them." When the prayer was over, he turned to the congregation and said: "Do you wish me to add some more units to the) morning prayer?" And at the same time he vomited what he had ten.[154]

al-Mas'udi writes in the same connection: al-Walid spent the whole night drinking wine with his companions, minstrels and musicians.

One day when the muezzin called for prayer, al-Walid dressed in his underwear and drunken, came to the mosque and stood at the altar to pray with the people. He offered four units

of prayer instead of the usual two and prolonged the act of prostration, during which, instead of praising God, he kept on saying: “Drink and give me a drink!” When he supposed the prayer to be over, he returned to the people and said: “Do you wish to offer more than four units of prayer?” ‘Attab athThaqafi, who was sitting in the first row behind al-Walid, shouted at him, saying: “May God favour you! What has happened to you? I swear to God that I am amazed at none but the caliph of the Muslims who has made a person like you governor over us!” The people, too, threw pebbles at him. When this brother of caliph ‘Uthman saw himself in such an awkward position, he staggeringly betook himself to the palace while murmuring ong eaning: I ever urn way rom ine and a pretty slave-girl, and do not deprive myself of their blessing and pleasure. I keep on drinking so much wine as to quench my brain, and then pass staggering through the crowd!”

The event about witnesses

At last the people of Kufah got wearied of the unlawful and obscene acts of al-Walid, and when they saw that their protests and complaints to ‘Uthman were of no avail, they decided to secure decisive evidence about al-Walid’s laxity and addiction, go to the caliph and inform him of the problem and confusion faced by their worldly and religious affairs, so as to convince him of these matters and compel him to turn his attention to their complaints and meet their requests.

To carry out this plan, the leaders of the people thought of removing, from al-Waljd’s finger in his state of drunkenness, the signet ring with which he sealed official documents and which ‘Uthman knew well, and show it to the caliph as a definite evidence.

al-Baladhuri writes in this connection(155) On the day al-Walid performed in drunkenness the prayer along with the people, Abu Zaynab; Zuhayr ibn ‘Awf al-Azdi asked for the help of al-Muwarra’ of the Banu Asad tribe in this plan. The latter agreed and declared his readiness.

On that day they were watching to find al-Walid drunk, but as it happened, he did not leave his residence even for the afternoon prayer. So they went to the door of his house, but the

porter did not allow them to enter. Abu Zaynab placed a dinar in the porter's hand, which on seeing the gold coin stood aside and opened the way for them. Both Abu Zaynab and al-Muwarra' entered and came across a strange and despicable scene. They saw al-Walid fallen in a corner in total drunkenness. They laid him on his bed, but at that moment alWalid vomited. Abu Zaynab without hesitation removed the signet ring from al-Walid's finger, and both of them left the house.

In 'Uthman's presence

Abu Zaynab, accompanied by three other dignitaries of Kufah departed via Basra for Medina, in order to meet the caliph and present to him their complaint about al-Walid. On coming to his presence they began by saying to the caliph: "Though we have no hope of winning your attention to our suffering, we consider it our duty to inform you of certain matters." 'Uthman asked what it was. They explained their complaints about al-Walid and described the details of the incidents and events from which the complaint arose, as well as the confusion and disorders which existed in Kufah.

'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf who was present in this meeting, enquired about complainants: "What does this mean? What do you think has happened to al-Walid? Has he gone mad?" They said: "No He gets drunk and loses all control due to excessive drinking." 'Uthman turned to Jundab and asked: "Have you yourself observed my brother's drinking spree?" Jundab said:
"No. Never!" But Abu Zaynab said: "I testify that I have seen him drunk, vomiting wine and polluting Himself. I myself removed ring from his finger while he was wholly intoxicated." 'Uthman asked: "How did you know he had taken wine?" They answered: "How could we not know? He drank the kind of wine we used in pagan times ourselves." Then they showed al-Walid's ring to the caliph and offered it as evidence. 'Uthman who had become very angry by this time threatened the complainants and witnesses, and promised punishment, and then placing his hand on their chests, dismissed them.

The caliph's reward to the witnesses

Abu Zaynab and his companions had with great hopes reached Medina, went to the caliph, informed him of the true situation and presented their evidence. But 'Uthman not only ignored their report and testimony about al-Walid's addiction to wine and his obscene acts during prayer, but also abused them and ordered to beat some of them. Those of the witnesses who had been maltreated went to 'Ali and begged for a solution. 'Ali went to 'Uthman, spoke in their favour and protested saying: "You are neglecting divine limits and insulting and maltreating the witnesses who have testified against your brother, and you are thus altering God's law!"(156)

'A'ishah too, whose help had been sought by the witnesses, shouted at 'Uthman, saying: "You have failed to carry out religious laws and insulted the witnesses."(157) The complainants had stated before 'Uthman that al-Walid drank wine of the kind used in pagan times.(158)

Their testimony was that al-Walid in his intoxication, had performed four units of morning prayers instead of the usual two, and then he had turned to the people offering to perform more units, and had then vomited. They said also that during the prayer, instead of reciting Quranic verse, he had sung a song about wine and women. They also exhibited the signet ring which they had removed from his finger while he was drunk, and handed it over to 'Uthman as final evidence.

Nevertheless, they saw no sign of attention to their complaint and testimony, but were insulted beaten and whipped instead, and also threatened with death.

'A'ishah opposing 'Uthman

Abu al-Faraj writes in al-Aghani: 'Uthman said in answer to their objections: "Is it not so that in taking umbrage to one's emir and ruler, one should level accusation against him? Now that this is the case I will order to punish you in the morning!"(159)

This group, fearing punishment by 'Uthman, took refuge in 'A'ishah's house, and when in the morning 'Uthman was

sharply rebuked by ‘A’ishah, he shouted: “Do Iraqi rebels and debauchees find no asylum but ‘A’ishah’s house?!”

When ‘A’ishah heard these insulting and unforgivable words of ‘Uthman she picked up a shoe, of the Prophet and raising it high cried out loudly: “How soon you have abandoned the way and tradition of God’s prophet, the owner of this shoe!”

These words of ‘A’ishah were soon reported to all the people of Medina, and they rushed to the mosque. The crowd became so dense that no room was left for newcomers. The words of ‘Uthman and ‘A’ishah were commented upon so excitedly that these produced a difference and division among the crowd. A number began to praise ‘A’ishah for her reaction, and others frowned and said in reproach: “Why should women meddle with such matters?”

The demonstrations of the two opposite groups reached a point where they fell upon one another, using stones and shoes in these attacks within the mosque.

al-Baladhuri adds and says: ‘Uthman did not remain silent against ‘A’ishah’s protest, and shouted angrily: “What right have you to interfere in the affairs? You have been ordered to keep quiet in your house!”

The people were divided in their opinion about this protest and reproach. Some supported ‘Uthman’s attitude while others backed ‘A’ishah and exclaimed: “Who deserves more than ‘A’ishah to interfere in the affairs?”

Arguments soared high to the point where the two groups fell upon one another with shoes. This was the first quarrel to occur among the Muslims after the departure of the Prophet.

This story is mentioned by al-Ya’qubi in his history, and by ‘Abd al-Barr in al-Isti’ab in a similar way, showing clearly the effect of ‘A’ishah’s action and interference. After this incident, Talhah and az-Zubayr went to ‘Uthman and said in reproach:

“We told you at the beginning not to let al-Walid take charge of any Muslims’ affairs. But you paid no attention to our words, and rejected them. It is not late yet. Now that a group has testified to his addiction to wine and his intoxication, it would be advisable to remove him.

‘All, too, said: ‘Remove al-Walid from his post, and if the witnesses give testimony in front of him, then you could

sentence him to the religious punishment."

al-Walid's dismissal and purification of the pulpit at the Kufah Mosque

'Uthman was compelled to dismiss al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah from the governorship of Kufah recall him to Medina, and appoint a new governor for Kufah. So he chose Sa'id ibn al-'As[160] as a governor of Kufah, ordering him to send al-Walid back to Medina.([161]) When Sa'id arrived in Kufah, he sent a message to al-Walid that he had been summoned to Medina by the caliph. But al-Walid postponed the order for a few days and ignored it. So Sa'id said to him: "Hasten to your brother, for, he has instructed me to send you to him." Then he ordered him to vacate and surrender the governor's house.

al-Walid was forced to obey, surrendered the governor's house and moved to the house of 'Amrah ibn 'Uqbah. Then Sa'id ordered to purify the pulpit of the Kufah mosque, and he did not ascend it until it was done.

Some of the Umayyad chiefs who had accompanied Sa'id to Kufah, requested him to desist from such a purification, and reminded him that if anyone else resorted to this act, it was his duty to check him, since such an act would disgrace al-Walid for ever (for, both of them belonged to the Umayyads and the same tribe). But Sa'id refused and the pulpit and the governor's house were eventually washed and purified.([162])

al-Aghani says: 'Uthman ordered al-Waljd to go back to Medina. When he was about to leave Kufah for Medina, a group of people including 'Adi ibn Hatam accompanied him in order to offer excuses for al-Walid's actions to the caliph. During the journey one day al-Wahid, according to the Arab custom, sang a song for the camels[163] and [164]. 'Adi exclaimed: "Let me see, where are you taking us like this?"

When al-Walid came to 'Uthman's presence in Medina and the witnesses testified to his face about his addiction to wine, 'Uthman was compelled to administer on him the legal punishment with the lash. But he let him wear a thick cloak so that he would not feel the strokes of the lash and sent him into the room where the punishment was to be carried out.

Justice dispensed by ‘Ali

Whenever any members of the Quraysh came to carry out the religious punishment, al-Walid said: “Look at your kin and yourself. Do not break the ties of relationship with me, and abstain from carrying out the punishment thereby enraging the commander of the faithful.” Thus an individual, hearing these words, desisted from doing his duty and no one dared administer the lash on al-Walid’s back.

When ‘Ali ibn Abi_Talib observed this, he picked up the lash and entered the room accompanied by his son, al-Hasan. al-Walid repeated his words in order to dissuade ‘Ali from his task. Al-Hasan confirmed his words and reminded his father of the purport. ‘Ali said in answer to his son: “If I, too, act in the same way, it would mean having no faith in God!”

It is also said that al-Walid asked ‘Au, in the name of God, reminding him of their kinship (the Umayyads and Banu Hashim were cousins) to desist from enforcing punishment. But ‘Ali said: “Be quiet; for, the reason for the annihilation of the Israelites was their oblivion of God’s limits. Let the Quraysh call me an executioner.”

al-Walid wrapped his cloak round himself, but ‘Ali pulled it away forcefully and dealt him forty strokes with a double-edged whip.

al-Mas’udi writes: when ‘Ali began to punish al-Walid, he abused ‘Ali and called him a blackmailer. ‘Aqil ibn Abi Talib who was present, shouted at him saying: “O son of Abu al Mu’ayt! It is strange how you have lost yourself! You forget that you are the same slave offspring of Safuriyah!”(165)

al-Walid kept on creeping here and there; trying to flee from the strokes, but ‘Ali seized him, knocked him down and whipped him.

When ‘Uthman observed his brother’s disgrace to such an extent, he protested to ‘Ali and said: “You had no right to treat him in that way.” But ‘Ali said: “I have the right! A worse treatment is deserved by one who engaged in debauchery and flees from justice and from the execution of divine punishment.”

When the whipping was over, al-Walid sang out a poem which meant: *“O Umayyads! May God bring separation between you and me in kinship; for, whoever of you gets rich, is treated*

well by you, and if he becomes poor, he despairs of you!"

It is said that after al-Walid received his punishment, 'Uthman was asked to get al-Walid's head shaved according to the custom for punished persons. But he refused and said; "Umar acted in that way, but he had abandoned it by the end of his rule."

After al-Walid's dismissal from his position as governor of Kufah on account of his addiction to wine, and due to his receiving punishment, 'Uthman did not deprive him of involvement in governmental affairs. Now he was commissioned to collect the tithe from the two tribes of Kalb and Bulaqayn, and thus the former debauchee governor became a trustee of state fund and collector of taxes.

We probed into various events of al Walid's history and found him a strange man and his friends even stranger than him. We found him to be a man notorious for adultery and addiction, who was regarded as an evil-doer by the Qur'an. This alone would be enough to show his personality and position in society to a considerable extent. He was so dominant over the weakness and carelessness of his brother, 'Uthman who governed the Islamic land, that he could turn him to any direction he wished, and as we saw, he so influenced him that he secured from him a free access to the life and property of the Muslims and rule over the people. He made use of his close relationship with the caliph to promote his own whims and fancies and, sheltered by this immunity, he carried out daringly and inconceivably his lustful designs. He granted his drunkard companions, the Christian poet, extensive land, arranged for him an allowance of money, pork and wine and allowed him entry Into the Muslims' place of worship in a gay and drunken state. He brought the Jewish magician into the mosque to perform his tricks and amuse the debauchee governor. He himself stood up to prayer in the altar of the mosque, gay and drunk and feasting garments, acting as Imam of the congregation, and performing four units of morning prayer instead of two, while prostrating instead of reciting lines in praise of God, drunkenly singing poems about women and wine, and polluting the altar with vomiting.

Even when this reckless debauchee was summoned to

Medina to investigate his deeds, and when the nobles of Kufah accompanied him to offer excuses to the caliph for his misdeeds, on the way to Medina, he nonchalantly spoke of wine, song and carnal desires, even though he fully knew that it was because of his conduct that he had been summoned to trial, resulting in his punishment.

All the Muslims were dissatisfied with that government and constantly expressed protest. Such matters had excited public opinion so much that all day and night the undesirable acts of the government of the time and its debauchee and godless agents had become the topics of discussion. All these talks and protests everywhere showed that a revolution was imminent and a general uprising against the government was about to begin, and that time it took the form of occasional protests of Ibn Mas'ud complaints of 'Ammar Abu Dharr, Jundab and other chief companions of the Prophet. At that time two outstanding personalities drew greater attention of the Muslims. The first was 'Ali ibn Abi_Talib who was well-known to the people, and from among all the great companions of the Prophet, it was only he who administered punishment in the presence of the caliph, despite the latter's unwillingness, without taking notice of his rage and uneasiness, and without fearing the vengeance of the Umayyads or its consequence.

It was a rare and amazing coincidence that this same unique and famous personality of all times had upon the order of the Prophet, beheaded the father of this same evil-doer who was whipped for his inattention to religious criteria and for his addiction to wine. Therefore, 'Ali had the right to say: "Let the Quraysh call me their executioner."

With such acts, 'Ali produced deep rancor in the hearts of the Quraysh which, later on, in 'Ali's caliphate, erupted into a violent hostility to spread everywhere. This flame eventually swallowed him and his family.

'A'ishah's instigation's against 'Uthman

The second distinguished personality was A'ishah who at that time had turned away from 'Uthman, to join his opponents and accept their leadership. In order to rouse public feelings against 'Uthman she had taken certain steps, which were

unprecedented, as these had not been taken by anyone before her. While the people were wholeheartedly attached to the memories of the Prophet, and still spoke of association with him, of his vision and gestures and even of his clothes, she raised his shoe as a decisive evidence of disregard of his ways and traditions by ‘Uthman thus rousing the people violently against him, and instigating them to her heart’s content.

With this single gesture which was made with a careful calculation and was appropriate in terms of time and place, she made a great number of people cynical about the caliphate’s administration and scattered them away from the caliph in the manner she desired. This step was so calculated that the supporters and opposers confronted each other, and arguments led to a quarrel and conflicts. The first clash among the Muslims took place after the Prophet’s death. At last, she succeeded in vanquishing the powerful and despotic caliph with her power, and compelling him to agree to the people’s demand dismiss his debauchee brother as governor of Kufah and summon him to the capital for trial.

Had it not been for her talent and genius in inciting people’s feelings, and for her leadership of ‘Uthman’s opponents, such a thing would not have occurred.

We know that she was not the only wife of the Prophet still living; Hafsah, Umm Habibah and Umm Salamah still lived, and each of them had some share in meddling with governmental affairs, but none of them showed such a leadership as ‘A’ishah especially in inciting the people against ‘Uthman.

It seems that unlike the tradition of the two preceding caliphs, ‘Uthman had prepared a special seat or throne for himself, which he sometimes shared with Abu Sufyan, leader of the Prophet’s opponents and commander of infidel forces, as well as his wicked and winebibbing brother and al-Hakam who was made an outcast by the Prophet. al-Hakam, son of Abu al‘-As and his uncle, who had been exiled by the Prophet, and also cursed and driven away from himself, was admitted as a favorite to ‘Uthman’s court, contrary to people’s expectations, and was shown such favors that he rose to greet him, allowing him to take his own seat, while himself taking an inferior place

below him.

We saw also that he had handed over control of the finance of a half of the eastern part of the country to his mad and wicked brother in order to console him, and had given this shameless fellow a free hand in taking possession; of the Muslims' public fund. On the contrary, he punished such a noble companion of the Prophet as Ibn Mas'ud, despite his brilliant record, on the charge of protesting against his wicked brother's misdeeds and abused him obscenely, driving him in disgrace Out of the mosque and breaking his ribs. He ordered to cut off his salary, and forbade his participation in the holy war with pagans, and to the end of his life this unfortunate old man was refused permission to leave Medina, and he committed all these mean acts only in support of his evil brother, al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah. We also noted that he rejected the testimony of the witnesses against his brother and awarded them lashes and threatened and drove them away. And when he was compelled to agree to the legal punishment of this brother, we saw that he made him wear a cloak so as not to feel the pain produced by the strokes of the lash, and also refused to allow the culprit's head to be shaved as an evidence of his punishment. And after all those wrong deeds, he commissioned him to collect tithe in a vast part of the Islamic country.

The subject of al-Walid ibn 'Uqbah, half brother of 'Uthman on the mother's side, and his five-year rule in Kufah, constituted one of the cases in which 'A'ishah interfered directly, and she openly rose in opposition to 'Uthman, using it as a pretext to start a combat with the caliphate. We also observed as to how she emerged victorious out of this combat and forced the center of power to submit to her.

'Ammar ibn Yasir

'Ammar is like the skin between my eyes.
The Prophet

Another matter with which 'A'ishah interfered personally and roused the people against the caliph, was related to 'Ammar ibn

Yasir.

Let us first introduce ‘Ammar and then relate the story. Abu al-Yaqzan ‘Ammar was the son of Yasir. His father belonged to the Arab tribe of Qahtani Mudhhaj, who came from Yemen to Mecca, befriended Abu Hudhayfah al-Makhzumi and married his slave-girl, Sumayyah from whom ‘Ammar was born. Abu Hudhayfah released ‘Ammar and thenceforth he was allied to the Banu Makhzum.

‘Ammar his brother, and parents were among the early Muslims who fearlessly proclaimed their faith in Islam, as a result of which they received nothing but pain and torture at the hands. of infidels who made them wear iron chain mail, lay them down on the stones of Meccan desert in burning sun, and placed heavy stones in their chests and bellies to compel them to abandon their religion. But these tortures did not have the slightest effect in weakening their steadfast faith as they refused to submit to the infidels’ pressure.

While they were being tortured by the infidels, the Prophet, happening to pass by, noticed their sorry condition, suffering so much under the scorching sun and being so maltreated by the inhuman pagans. So he turned to them and consolingly said: “O Yasir’s household! Be patient! Heaven is waiting for you!”

Sumayyah ‘Ammar’s mother, passed away as a result of a blow received from Abu Jahl with his weapon, and thus she became the first martyr for the cause of Islam. After Sumayyah, her husband Yasir who was ‘Ammar’s father died under the tortures inflicted by the pagans. But ‘Ammar contrary to his inherent desire, in order to be saved from their cruelty, was compelled to utter the words forced upon him, abuse the Prophet thereby being released by the infidels.

It was reported to the Prophet that ‘Ammar had turned unbeliever and gone astray. The Prophet said: “Never! Faith is so deep in ‘Ammar that it has taken root in the whole of his soul!”

Meanwhile ‘Ammar who was writhing with pain and sorrow, and shedding tears, came to the Prophet who received him affectionately and wiped his tears, saying: “If they molest you again, repeat your words of abuse and deliver yourself from their mischief s!” It was on this occasion that the following verse

descended about ‘Ammar (Chapter an-Nahl Verse 106).

“He who disbelieves in Allah after his having believed, not he who is compelled while his heart is at rest on account of his faith.”

‘Ammar contributes to building the first mosque of Islam

‘Ammar emigrated to Medina and took part in the battle of Badr and other battles. When the Prophet emigrated to Medina, ‘Ammar took part in the construction of the Quba’ Mosque and thus he became the first builder of an Islamic mosque.(166)

He took part also in the construction of the Prophet’s mosque, and showed much more activity than some other companions in carrying stones and bricks. In the meantime, ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan who was an aristocratic Quraysh companion and wore expensive garments, did not show much activity and kept on removing from himself and his clothes the dust raised by the other companions. ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib who observed this, began to recite a poem while engaged in work, meaning:(167)

“Those who labor in building a mosque and are constantly on the move, are not the equal of those who avoid dust and stay away.”

‘Ammar who was a simple-minded person and did not know what the poem hinted, began to recite the same poem. ‘Uthman who knew what ‘Ali meant thought that ‘Ammar was deliberately cutting jokes at him. So he said: “O son of Sumayyah! I know your meaning! By God I will knock you on the head with this stick!” The Prophet, who noticed the scene, was vexed at ‘Uthman’s threat and said: “What do they expect from ‘Ammar? He is inviting them to heaven while they call him to the fire! ‘Ammar is like skin between my eyes. Abstain from molesting a man who has attained such a rank!”

According to another narration, the story goes on as follows:

When the companions saw the Prophet’s uneasiness, they asked ‘Ammar himself to find a way to alleviate that uneasiness. So ‘Ammar who was carrying a heavy load of unbaked bricks, turned to the Prophet and said laughingly: “O Prophet of God! Your companions have killed me, for, they load me with what they are unable to carry themselves.”

As the Prophet was removing dust from ‘Ammar’s curly hair, he said: “O Sumayyah’s son! These are not your killers; your killers are the unruly group.”

The Prophet has, on many occasions, praised ‘Ammar such as the time when Khalid ibn al-Waljd spoke angrily to ‘Ammar. So he said: “Whoever shows hostility to ‘Ammar will be faced with God’s hostility, and whoever earns ‘Ammar’s rancor will receive God’s wrath.”

‘Ammar took part in the battles of al-Jamal and Siffin under ‘Ali. In the latter battle whenever he proceeded towards the battlefield, he was followed by the Prophet’s friends, as if the Prophet’s words sounded in their ears, saying: “You will surely be killed by an unruly group!” As he was advancing followed by the companions, he sang Out the following words in the battle of Siffin: ‘Today is the day when together with my friends I meet Muhammad and his party.”

Eventually in the same battle ‘Ammar was killed by the soldiers of Mu’aiyah ibn Abi Sufyan, and two of them fell upon one another in order to receive the honor of having killed him. ‘Amr ibn al-’As said: “By God! These two are fighting each other for the purpose of going to hell. I swear to God that I wish to have died twenty years ago!”(168)

‘Uthman and ‘Ammar

Now that we are acquainted with ‘Ammar, it would be fitting to know as to what extent ‘Uthman has carried out the Prophet’s recommendation about ‘Ammar, and what reaction was shown by ‘A’ishah, and how she has used him for pounding ‘Uthman.

al-Baladhuri writes: On the day that they reported to ‘Uthman the death of Abu Dharr in ar-Rabadhah (169) he said: “May he be blessed by God!” ‘Ammar who was present said sadly: “Yes we say from the bottom of our heart, may God bless him.” ‘Uthman who did not expect such a reproach shouted at ‘Ammar: “You villain! Are you reminding me of his exile? Go and take his place!” Then he ordered his beating.

‘Ammar prepared to leave since the caliph had ordered him to do so. A number of the people of Banu Makhzum’s tribe who were allied to ‘Ammar went to ‘Ali, asking him to intercede with ‘Uthman to cancel his order. ‘Ali did so and said to

'Uthman: "Uthman, fear God! You have exiled a chaste man as a result of which he died there. Now you intend to treat a similar man in the same way?"

They argued for some time, and at last 'Uthman said roughly to 'Ali: "You deserve exile more than he." 'Ali answered: "You can order it if you wish!" The emigrants gathered and said to the caliph: "These wont's do that you exile anyone who has a word with you!" So 'Uthman was obliged to let 'Ammar alone.(170)

One day some of the Prophet's companions including al Miqdad ibn 'Amr, 'Ammar ibn Yasir, Talhah and az-Zubayr, after some consultations wrote a letter to 'Uthman enumerating his improper acts spoke about the fear of God into his heart, adding that if he did not abandon his practice, they would rise and rebel against him. (171) 'Ammar took the letter to him, and read a part of it. 'Uthman who had become very angry at 'Ammar's impudence and at the contents of the letter, shouted at him: "From among this group is it you alone who have resorted to this act and brought the letter?"

-Yes, because I wish you well more than others do.

'Uthman said: "You are lying, O son of Sumayyah!"

'Ammar answered: "You call me the son of Sumayyah? By God I am the son of Sumayyah and Yasir!"

'Uthman who was greatly enraged ordered his servants to get hold of 'Ammar's legs and arms, forced him to assume the position of a crucified person, and then with the shoe on his foot gave him such a kick between the legs that he made him suffer from hernia, and fall down unconscious.

Public funds kept on private asset

Another occasion when 'Uthman quarreled with 'Ammar was when the former had taken jewels Out of the public fund. Al-Baladhuri writes: In the Medinan treasury, there was a basket full of jewelry and valuable ornaments. 'Uthman had taken out some pieces to adorn one of his ladies.

The people heard of this and they began -to criticize and reproach 'Uthman, speaking disparagingly to him. Their protests angered him so intensely that he climbed the pulpit and said: Despite all the protests we will take whatever we wish

out of this fund!

'Ali protested to him and said: "You will be stopped and not allowed to act so obstinately and seize public property." 'Ammar too shouted: "I take God as witness that I will be the first person not to tolerate such an action" 'Uthman cried Out in rage: "You scoundrel! Do you dare to be insolent towards me?" Then issued order for arresting him. They seized 'Ammar and took him to the caliph's house. When 'Uthman arrived, he ordered to bring 'Ammar to his presence. Then he beat him so hard that 'Ammar fell down unconscious and he was later thrown out of the house in the same condition. Then other people carried him to the house of Umm Salamah, wife of the Prophet.

Many hours and even the time for prayer passed and he was still unconscious. Later on, he regained consciousness and performed ablution and prayer and then said: God be praised! This is not the first time that we are tortured in the way of God!

As we have already said, 'Ammar was allied to the Banu Makhzum tribe. When Hisham ibn al-Walid al-Makhzumi learnt of such maltreatment, he protested to 'Uthman and said:
"You take heed of 'Ali and Banu Hashim and do not molest them, but act unjustly towards us and beat our brother to death. By God! If 'Ammar dies I will kill a pot-bellied fellow! (Meaning 'Uthman)"

'Uthman became very angry and abused him, saying: "O son of Qasriyah![l72] Do not show so much impudence." Hisham answered: "Then remember that I reach Qasriyah by two mothers!"

'Uthman ordered to expel Hisham from his house and he went straight to Umm Salamah and found her to be very uneasy about 'Ammar's affair and at the injustice done to him.

'A'ishah aiding 'Ammar

When 'A'ishah heard of 'Ammar's affair, she was greatly enraged and in protest to 'Uthman's conduct, she held up a lock of the Prophet's hair, his shirt and shoe and cried out. "How soon you have forgotten the tradition of the owner of this hair, shirt and shoe, whereas they have remained from him and have not yet gone old or worn out?"

The crowd in the mosque was greatly roused and cried out the name of God. ‘Amr ibn al-’As who had been dismissed by ‘Uthman as governor of Egypt and was replaced by ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh was deeply vexed with ‘Uthman. He kept on exclaiming: “I take refuge unto God!” more loudly than others, and expressed much astonishment. Meanwhile, ‘Uthman was in such a rage that he could not utter a word.(173)

Burial of Ibn Mas’ud and al-Miqdad

The burial of Ibn Mas’ud was another occasion when ‘Ammar was subjected to ‘Uthman’s anger. Ibn Mas’ud had willed at the time of his death that ‘Ammar should perform his burial prayer without informing ‘Uthman. ‘Ammar carried out the will, but when ‘Uthman learnt of the matter, he became very angry with ‘Ammar. al-Miqdad too died not long after and he too willed that ‘Ammar rather than ‘Uthman should perform his burial prayer. This will too was duly fulfilled by ‘Ammar without informing ‘Uthman. He became angrier with ‘Ammar this time and exclaimed: “Woe to me at this son of a slave-girl! I knew him well!”(174)

What mostly draws our attention to these incidents is the confrontation of ‘Uthman with ‘Ammar and utterance of obscene language. In view of what is quoted from ‘A’ishah in well-known commentaries to the effect that ‘Uthman was a very shy, modest and polite person and that even the angels feel shy at his modesty and virtue, how could such obscene words be indicative of that modesty and politeness?

Meanwhile, we observe ‘A’ishah as a wise leader, organizing the people and those harmed by ‘Uthman against him. He was so clear-sighted that she knew exactly what roused public feelings and excitement.

On the first occasion she incited the people only by showing a shoe of the Prophet, and achieved the required result with such an act. She knew well that the same simple object would not for the second time be so effective in rousing public feelings. But at the same time, she was aware that she should not disregard the first experiment altogether. So she added the Prophet’s hair and shirt to the shoe, and these simple relics of him did the trick in instigating people thereby shaking the very foundation of the

caliph’s rule.

By these two simple but significant methods, she was able, in a clever manner, to destroy the immunity which ‘Uthman had secured as an outstanding Islamic personality and the lofty position that he had gained among the Muslims as successor to the Prophet.

She was able to use appropriate means which required no proof and argument in order to exhibit the caliph’s true personality, one side, and the Prophet’s way and tradition, and his relics and ladies on the other, thereby destroying the respect shown to ‘Uthman and considerably lowering his position and prestige in the society to such a level where an uprising against the caliph was not only considered important, but rather as something easy and practicable.

This lowering of the dignity was confined to the person of the caliph, but extended also to the position of the caliphate, since from that time onward, it no longer possessed the former respect and dignity in the Muslim society and was regarded with little credit. Consequently the people began to show insolence and disobedience openly to the caliphs who succeeded Uthman.

Moreover, the sequence of events showed that the relation between ‘A’ishah and ‘Uthman continued to be drained further. Once she had been a staunch supporter of ‘Uthman, but now she became one of this strongest opponent, and as time went by her rancor and hostility towards him became sharper.

It may be said that the verbal duels between them began with the reduction of her pension by him, and the passage of time, succession of events and her sharp protests which were met with even sharper responses, changed ‘A’ishah from a personality who defended the interests of others into a vengeful and determined person who wished to maintain her own position, and so she came to be regarded as a strong and stubborn enemy of the caliph and caliphate.

Now her opposition to ‘Uthman was not merely for the sake of preservation of the interests of others but for upholding her owns personality and position in an increasing manner.

Part Four
Revolution

‘A’ishah assumes the leadership of the revolution

In the riot and uprising against ‘Uthman, members of ‘A’ishah’s family from the tribe of Taym too rose up.

Text of the book

What we have so far described constituted the most important factors used by ‘A’ishah for people’s opposition to and uprising against ‘Uthman. But the improper and wrong acts of ‘Uthman and those godless ones around him were so abundant that each of them had its share in sowing the seeds of rebellion and revolution against him and his administration in the people’s hearts. Obviously all these factors had their influence in people’s uprising against him and in scattering most of the companions away from him.

But those same people (probably due to the same fabricated traditions) could gather enough courage and boldness to protest to the caliph and successor of the Prophet, let alone draw sword upon him!

But they were given this courage and boldness by the daring and violent reproaches to ‘Uthman by Ibn Mas’ud, ‘Ammar ibn Yasir, Abu Dharr al-Ghifari, Jundab and other top companions. Therefore the excuse needed only a spark to start the people’s uprising and revolution, and this spark came with the historical verdict of ‘A’ishah which eventually overthrew ‘Uthman despite all his power and position, leading to his assassination.

With her intelligence in sight ‘A’ishah made utmost use of

people’s readiness to rise against ‘Uthman to her own favour, since she saw that the people had reached the limit of their patience due to his chaotic rule and could no longer tolerate the injustice of the careless administrators around him. Thus, she decided to preserve her position and domination, assume the role of a leader in rousing public antagonism against the caliph, and lead them in the direction she desired.

The people who were thirsty for revolution against the oppressive government of ‘Uthman were given a fresh exhilaration and impetus by the words and actions of ‘A’ishah against ‘Uthman, and were made more optimistic of victory. Her name words and actions were carried to all parts of Medina, Hejaz and the whole extensive realm of Islam, especially when the members of the Taym tribe rose in support of ‘A’ishah and assumed a significant role in this uprising.

al-Baladhuri who has a high position among the followers of the school of caliphs, writes in his book of ‘Ansab al-ashraf:

“The members of the Taym household in the uprising against ‘Uthman rose to aid Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr and Talhah, his cousin. The rise of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and ‘A’ishah’s brother supported by the Taym tribe began in Egypt, for Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah made preparations for a rebellion in Egypt against ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh who had been appointed as its governor by ‘Uthman, and at last took control of that land.

Now before describing this event, we should introduce three historical figures who played a significant role in these events.

Three figures

‘Uthman gave a governmental post to ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d shedding of whose blood had been declared lawful by the Prophet.

Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr

1-’Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh

‘Abd Allah, son of Sa’d, was the grandson of Abi Sarh of the ‘Amir al-Qurayshj tribe. His mother had given suck to ‘Uthman,

and thus ‘Uthman and ‘Abd Allah were foster brothers.

‘Abd Allah embraced Islam before the capture of Mecca and emigrated to Medina to join the Prophet’s scribes. But he turned apostate after some time and returned to Mecca. He said to the Quraysh chiefs: “Muhammad was subservient to my will and carried out whatever I told him, for example when he wanted me to write “Dear Sir” and I asked him whether I could write “Learned Sir”, he said: ‘It makes no difference both of them are correct.”

God has sent the following verse about ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d:

“And who is more unjust than he who forges a lie against Allah, or says. It has been revealed to me; while nothing has been revealed to him, and he who says: I can reveal the like of what Allah has revealed and if you had seen when the unjust had been in the agonies of death and the angels shall spread forth their hands: Give up your souls; today shall you be recompensed with an ignominious chastisement because you spoke against Allah other than the truth and because you showed your pride against His communications. “(175)

When the Muslims captured Mecca the Prophet issued a decree for ‘Abd Allah’s death, even if he may have clung on to the cloth of the Ka’bah for refuge. ‘Abd Allah, in fear, took refuge with ‘Uthman who concealed him somewhere, until he was brought to the Prophet asking him for clemency. The Prophet remained silent for some time without looking up and at last he granted it. When ‘Uthman returned, the Prophet turned to those present and said: “I remained silent to see if one of you would rise and cut off his head.”

They said: “You could have made a sign to us to do so.” The Prophet said: “It is not worthy of a prophet to give a signal with his eye.”(176)

When ‘Uthman became caliph, he appointed such a notorious fellow as governor of Egypt in the year 25 AH because of being his brother, and dismissed ‘Amr ibn al-’As from that post.

‘Abd Allah conquered some parts of Africa, and ~Uthman rewarded him with one-fifth of the spoils of war. He remained governor of Egypt until the year 34 AH, and after the uprising staged by Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah he fled to ‘Asqalan to stay there until ‘Uthman’s death. He died in the year 57 or 59

AH**.**

2-Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr

Muhammad was the son of Abu Bakr, the first caliph, and his mother was Asma', daughter of 'Umays from the al-Khath'am tribe, who was at first the consort of Ja'far ibn Abi_Talib, and after his martyrdom, she married Abu Bakr. Muhammad was born on the way to Mecca in the last Hajj pilgrimage of the Prophet.

When Abu Bakr died, 'Ali married Asma' and thus Muhammad grew up in 'Ali's house and was brought up by him. So he became one of his steadfast devotees.

Muhammad took part under 'Ali in the battles of al-Jamal (against his own sister 'A'ishah) and Siffin and was then appointed by the Imam as governor of Egypt. He arrived there on 15th of Ramadan in the year 37 AH and held the rein of affairs. But when in the year 38 AH, Mu'awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan sent 'Amr ibn al-'As with an army to conquer Egypt 'Amr defeated Muhammad and captured him, and Mu'awiyah ibn Khudayj killed upon the order of 'Amr, his dead body was placed in the belly of a dead donkey and burnt.(177)

3-Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah

Abu al-Qasim Muhammad was the son of Abu Hudhayfah ibn 'Utbah of the 'Abd Shams al-Qurayshi tribe, and his mother was Sahlah, daughter of Suhayl ibn 'Amr of the 'Amir tribe. His parents were among the emigrants to Abyssinia where Muhammad was born. Abu Hudhayfah was martyred in al-Yamamah in the combat with Musaylamah, the False (Kadhdhab). 'Uthman adopted Muhammad as a son and brought him up so he grew up under 'Uthman's care.

When 'Uthman became caliph, Muhammad asked his leave to go to Egypt to fight the infidels, and 'Uthman gave him permission to do so. So Muhammad went there and when the people rose in rebellion against 'Uthman he too took a significant role in inciting the people and eventually attacked 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Sarh and defeating him drove him out of Egypt and held the rein of affairs.

The Egyptians willingly accepted his rule and swore

allegiance to him and thus he became governor there.

When ‘Ali became caliph, he retained Muhammad in his position and Muhammad continued to rule until Mu’awiyah who was on his way to Siffin to fight ‘Ali, but turned course to fight Muhammad. But Muhammad in this confrontation prevented him from entering al-Fustat, the first Egyptian city on the ash-Sham side, but when he found himself unable to make a stand against Mu’awiyah he proposed peace to him.

In peace negotiations Mu’awiyah agreed that Muhammad and his companions should be secure and leave Egypt. But when he departed with thirty of his friends from Egypt, Mu’awiyah contrary to his promise and in an unmanly manner, took captive and imprisoned him in Damascus and he was eventually killed by Rushdayn, Mu’awiyah’s slave.

Muhammad had had the benefit of association with the Prophet.(178)

Now before dealing with the story of the uprising of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah, we must say that ‘Amr ibn al-’As who conquered Egypt had held its governorship since ‘Umar’s time and a part of his duty was to collect taxes and act as the imam of the congregation. But this manner of governing did not last long in ‘Uthman’s time, and soon enough he was relieved of the task of collecting taxes, and ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh was entrusted with this duty. ‘Amr ibn al-’As was commissioned to deal only with the people’s religious matters and lead the congregation prayer. But soon after, he was relieved of this duty, too, and it was given to ‘Abd Allah, thus allowing his foster brother to perform both duties, and in this way ‘Amr ibn al-’As was removed from the governorship of Egypt.(179)

The uprising of the Egyptians

> O *‘Uthman! We have come to you. in protest of your deeds and the conduct of your governor.*
>
> ***People of Egypt***

al-Baladhuri writes: Alter the peoples in various parts of the

extensive realm of Islam joined together in their protests against ‘Uthman and when ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh held the governorship of Egypt on ‘Uthman’s behalf, Muhammad ihn Abi Hudhayfah and Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr arrived in Egypt and became united with Muhammad ibn Talhah(180) in their purpose.

On the morning of their arrival to Egypt, owing to his delay for the congregation prayer Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah was compelled to perform it all by himself and recite aloud. When ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh who was present, heard his voice, he ordered to bring him to his presence after the completion of his prayer. When they took him to ‘Abd Allah ibn Said ibn Abi Sarh he asked Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah:

-Why have you come here?

- To participate in the combat with infidels.

-Who is with you?

-Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr.

-I swear that this is not so. You have come to start a riot and rebellion.

Then he ordered to imprison both of them. So they had to ask the aid of Muhammad ibn Talhah to intercede for them with the governor so as not to prevent them from taking part in the combat against infidels. Thus ‘Abd Allah set them free and took part in the war himself. But as he was apprehensive of those two, he arranged to provide a separate ship for them and checked them from contact with the people.

But Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr fell ill and was unable to leave with the governor of Egypt. So Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah too was compelled to stay until his friend recovered, and when he got well, both of them accompanied by a number of Muslims went to war.

During this time, owing to their constant contact and talk with the soldiers of Islam, they informed them of the caliph’s unjust admin-istration, so that on their return from the war against enemies, they had enlightened the people’s hearts with hatred and rage against ‘Uthman and his misdeeds.(181)

al-Baladhuri elsewhere writes: “While the governor of Egypt was severely reproaching Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah and Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, the son of Abu Hudhayfah turned to

the people and said: The Egyptians should realize that we have left behind the holy war in the way of God, namely the combat with ‘Uthman.”

at-Tabari writes in his history: “In the same year that ‘Abd Allah went to war with infidels, the sons of Abu Hudhayfah and Abu Bakr, too, accompanied him, and at the same time these two kept on reminding the people of ‘Uthman’s misdeeds and unlawful actions and how he had even seen the traditions and ways of ‘Umar and Abu Bakr changed. They cited as an example the fact that he had appointed as governor (over the life and property of the Muslims) a man like ‘Abd Allah whose blood has been declared legitimate by the Prophet, and he has given asylum to those who had been driven away by the Prophet and has recalled them from their exile. Thus spil1ing ‘Uthman’s blood would be lawful. They harped so much on this topic that they turned the warriors of Islam against the government of the time.

It is also said that Muhammad son of Abu Hudhayfah said to the people: “I swear to God that we have ignored the true jihad.’ They asked: “Which jihad are you speaking of?” He said: “The combat and jihad against ‘Uthman.”

Then he described the misdeeds of ‘Uthman to such an extent that he turned everyone against the government and when they returned to their cities and homelands, the people spoke protestingly about ‘Uthman in an unprecedented manner.[(182)]

What was effective in promoting the propaganda’s of the sons of Abu Hudhayfah and Abu Bakr, was the people’s dissatisfaction of the Egyptians and with the ways of ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh, their governor, who abstained from no injustice towards them. He even went so far as to beat to death some of the chiefs who had complained of him to ‘Uthman.

at-Tabari and others have fully described the story of the Egyptians’ complaints of ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh in ‘Uthman’s presence, asking Ibn ‘Udays to act as their spokesman. He reported all the misdeeds of ‘Abd Allah to ‘Uthman and stated how harshly he treats the Muslims and followers of other religions who live under Islam’s protection and oppresses them, and disregards the principle of right and

fairness, and does whatever he himself wants, and when he is criticized for his deeds, he shows the caliph's letter telling him what to do.(183)

Imam 'Ali's endeavors for quenching the fire of sedition

The emigrants and Ansar (helpers) gathered round Imam asking him to *speak with 'Uthman, advising him in order to quench the fire of sedition.*

al-Ba1adhurl

Ibn A'tham writes his book of history(184): Some distinguished Egyptians came to Medina to complain of 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Sarh, and went straight to the Prophet's mosque, where they met a group of the Prophet's companions including both the emigrants and helpers. When they were asked the purpose of their journey to Medina, they answered: "We have come to complain of the injustice of our governor."

'Ali said to them: "Do not be hasty in your actions and judgment. State your complaint to the caliph and inform him of the matter. The governor of Egypt may have acted towards you according to the caliph's instructions. Go to the caliph and explain your difficulties. If 'Uthman is strict to him and removes him from his position, you will have attained your goal, and if he does nothing, and approves of his deeds, then you can decide what to do."

The Egyptians thanked and blessed 'Ali and added: "What you said is quite true, but we beg you to accompany us in our meeting with the caliph."

Ali said: "You do not need my presence. It would be enough for you to see him and state your case.

They said: "This is our purpose but we wish you to be present, too, and act as our witness."

'Ali said: "Your witness will be He who is stronger than me, more dominant over all people, and more sympathetic to His servants."

The Egyptian nobles went to ‘Uthman’s house and asked permission to enter. When they were admitted, the caliph received them respectfully, and let them sit by him. Then he asked: “What have you come for? What has made you leave Egypt without my personal permission or my governors?”

They: said: “We have come to complain of you and your deeds, and of what your governor does.”

Then Ibn A’tham describes the evidence and reasons which that group presented to the caliph against ‘Abd Allah Abi Sarh and reports the conversation between them and ‘Uthman.

The Uprising of the people of Medina against ‘Uthman

The wrong acts of ‘Uthman, his administrators and governors increased, and the people’s complaints and protests produced no result. A wave of objections and dissatisfaction spread over the whole of the Islamic realm and at last shook Medina, the capital of the government, too.

al-Baladhuri narrates these events as follows: When ‘Uthman became caliph, a number of the Prophet’s companions were not pleased with his rule since he had a special attachment for his relatives.

During his twelve years of caliphate, he gave governmental posts to the Umayyads who had not been associated with the Prophet, and they committed many unexpected acts which the companions could not tolerate and so they began to protest.

But ‘Uthman disregarded everything and reproached none of his agents, nor did he remove them from their posts. During the second six years of his rule he gave preference to his cousins over other Muslims and appointed them to such governmental positions which gave them a free hand over the people’s life and property. For example ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh had been given the governorship of Egypt, and the subjects had repeatedly complained to ‘Uthman for ‘Abd Allah’s tyranny and oppression, asking for justice. At last ‘Uthman was compelled to write to him and intimidate him. But ‘Abd Allah did not abstain from his extreme harshness and even beat some of them to death.(185)

When suffering and hardship passed beyond endurance and

the Muslims could no more bear the misdeeds of ‘Uthman and those around him, those of the Prophet’s companions who were in Medina, wrote letters to their Muslim brethren in other cities and roused them to a holy war against ‘Uthman.

at-Tabari quotes the text of the letter as follows: “You have departed from Medina for the sake of jihad in the way of Almighty God and for propagating the religion of Muhammad, whereas he who governs you has ruined and destroyed Muhammad’s faith. Reconsider your position and make haste in strengthening the foundation of Islamic religion.”

In Ibn al-Athir’s narration the following sentence of the letter is mentioned: “Your caliph has destroyed Muhammad’s religion.” In the commentary of Ibn Abi al-Hadid we see this phrase added at the end of the letter: “Depose him as a caliph.” Thus, the dissatisfied people came on him from every corner until he was killed.[186]

al-Baladhuri writes [187]: “In the year 34 of Hijrah a number of the Prophet’s companions wrote a letter to their friends among other companions, complaining of ‘Uthman’s conduct and his altering the Prophet’s laws and traditions, and of the injustice of his agents towards the people. They criticized the caliph’s deeds and asked them to come hastily to Medina for a holy war in the way of God.”

In that year none of the companions were willing to defend ‘Uthman and take his side except Zayd ibn Thabit [188], Abu Usayd as-Sa’idi and Hassan ibn Thabit [189] and Ka’b ibn Malik [190]. The emigrants and others gathered round ‘Ali and begged him to reason with ‘Uthman and advise and guide him. ‘Ali agreed and went to him and said: “The people have come to me and have told me many things about you and your deeds. I swear that I do not know what to say to you! Nothing is unknown to you that need be instructed and you are not in need of guidance. You know all that we know, and we have not got a lead over you to make it necessary to inform you. You have been associated with the Prophet and have benefited like us, from his words and experience. The sons of Abu Quhafah and al-Khattab were not worthier than you in the performance of good deeds, since you are closer to the Prophet in your attachment and kinship. Once you had the honour of being his son-in-law. So,

come to yourself and fear for your life. You go ahead so blindly that it is very hard to give you a clear sight, and you have sunk in such ignorance that it is impossible to drag you out."

'Uthman answered: "I swear to God that if you were in my place, I would not reproach you, and would not blame you for favoring-your kith and kin, or protecting your helpless relatives, or for appointing to jobs those who were appointed by 'Umar! I ask you in the name of God to tell me had not 'Umar appointed to governorship al-Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah who had no merit at all?"

'Ali said: "Yes, it is true."

'Uthman said: "Why is it then that you blame me now for appointing my relative, son of 'Amir as governor?"

'Ali said: "I must remind you that when 'Umar appointed someone he dominated him completely, and trampled upon him before doing so. And when he received a report about his misdeed, he was strict to him, and summoned him, and showed him severity of action. But you have failed to do so, and have shown-weakness and lenience to your kith and kin."

'Uthman said: "But they are not only my kith and kin, they are your relatives too." (since the Umayyads and Banu Hashim were cousins)

'Ali said: "Yes, upon my life they are my close relations, but they possess no virtue and chastity and others have with me a greater superiority and merit."

'Uthman said: "Had 'Umar not given governorship to Mu'awiyah?"

'Ali said: "Yes but Mu'awiyah feared 'Umar deeply, and was totally obedient to him. He was even afraid of Yarf', 'Umar's slave, more than of Umar. But he is now stubbornly indifferent to you dealing with the affairs, and does what he likes. He does these things without informing you and says to the people: 'This is 'Uthman's order!' The people report these matters to you but you take no step at all!"(191)

Then 'Ali rose and went out. After his exit 'Uthman went to the mosque, climbed the pulpit and said: "There is a shortcoming to every deed, and a defect in every task. The pest of this ummah and defect of this blessing are the cavillers, who appear to exhibit what you approve of,. while in secret they

perform such deeds that you disapprove! Like an ostrich they follow every noise and love the remotest watering-thought! By God, you people now criticize me for what you had submitted to in ‘Umar’s time and turn away from them, whereas ‘Umar trampled upon you and knocked you on the head and pulled out your root with his sharp tongue! You were so afraid of him that you bowed to his ugliness and beauty and were wholly obedient to him.

But you show insolence and rebel against me who am gentle and lenient to you and have withheld my hand and tongue from you.”

At this moment’ Marwan was about to say something but ‘Uthman exclaimed: “Be silent!”(192)

Marwan ibn al-Hakam

As the subject of Marwan will come up often in subsequent chapters, we should introduce this distinguished personality who later on became one of the Umayyad rulers.

He is the son of al-Hakam ibn Abi al-’As whom we introduced in the chapter on al-Walid and his governorship of Kufah. His by-name is Abu ‘Abd al-Malik, and he was a cousin of ‘Uthman as well as his son-in-law.

He was born before the capture of Mecca, and he was only a child when he accompanied his father to exile in at-Ta’if by the order of the Prophet. He remained in exile with his father and brothers until Uthman’s caliphate, and then ‘Uthman brought them back to Medina, and kept Marwan close to him and entrusted him with the scribe office. of his court.

Marwan’s presence and his influence on the caliph were the main factor of ‘Uthman’s misfortune, people’s dissatisfaction and eventually Muslims’ uprising against ‘Uthman. When the rebels besieged him and Marwan instead of treating them with moderation, rose to fight them, he was injured in the neck during the conflict and as a consequence one of the tendons of his neck was cut off and his neck remained awry to the end of his life and the people scoffingly nicknamed him “the crooked figure”.

One day ‘Ali looked at him and said: “Woe to you, and woe to the ummah of Muhammad from you and your offspring’s!”

Marwan fought in the battle of al-Jamal in ‘A’ishah’s army against ‘Ali and when Mu’awiyah became caliph, he made Marwan governor of Medina, Mecca and at-Ta’if, but dismissed him from this post in the year 48 of the Hijrah, and replaced him by Sa’id ibn Abi al-’As.

When Mu’awiyah ibn Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah died in ash-Sham and did not appoint anyone as his successor, a number of people in ash-Sham showed allegiance to Marwan, while ad-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fahri and his friends in ash-Sham showed allegiance to ‘Abd Allah ibn az-Zubayr. Consequently fighting took place between Marwan and ad-Dahhak at Maraj Rahit of Damascus in which ad-Dahhak was killed and ash-Sham and Egypt came under the control of Marwan, and he married the wife of Yazid ibn Mu’awiyah, Khalid’s mother, in order to bring everything under his complete domination.

One day Marwan was angry with Khalid and insulted him with a very obscene word about his mother. Khalid said to him:“You are a trusted traitor!” and complained of him to his mother and reported what had happened. She was very angry at this insult to herself, and said to her son: “Keep this to yourself, and particularly let not Marwan know that you have reported it to me.

Then in order to punish Marwan, she held a private session with her maids, and after divulging her plan, she made them her accomplice, and sat down waiting. When Marwan came in, Khalid’s mother and her maids rushed upon him and knocked him down. Then she picked up a pillow and placed it on his mouth and sat down on it until he died.

Historians have written that Marwan is one of the few people who have been killed by women.(193) A description of his thought and beliefs, will be given in later chapters for the reader to judge.

Pleaders for justice proceed to Medina

Do you not see how 'Uthrnan intends to deceive and lead me astray by bribing me?

Muhammad son of Abu Hudhayfah

The chief of the Kufans was Ka'b ibn 'Ubdah an-Nahdi that of the people of Basra was al-Muthana ibn Mukharrimah al-'Abdi and that of the Egyptians was Kinanah ibn Bishr ibn 'Attab. They described 'Uthman's misdeed and the changes he had brought about and the pacts which according to God's testimony he had violated. At last they decided not to remain silent, but to return to their respective cities and act as the spokesmen of this meeting and inform the people of the conclusion of their discussions, and let those who agreed with them know their plant which was to go to 'Uthman's house the following year and reproach him for his misdeeds. If 'Uthman regretted his conduct and abstained from wrong deeds, all the better, otherwise the y would reach a final decision about him. This group acted upon this decision.(194)

As the people of Egypt showed more fervor than those of other lands, in order to quench the flame of their revolution, 'Uthman sent Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah, a sum of 30,000 drachmas and a camel-load of clothes to silence the leader of the riot.

Muhammad ordered to exhibit the gifts in the mosque, and addressing the Muslims he said: "0 Muslims! Do you not see how 'Uthman intends to deceive and lead me astray by bribing me, and thus make me abandon my faith?" 'Uthman's action and Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah's reaction enhanced the Egyptians' enmity for 'Uthman and roused them for further criticisms, and so they turned more to Muhammad and chose him as their leader.(195)

The money thus spent by 'Uthman for this purpose could not prevent the Egyptians from their departure for Medina in compliance to the pact concluded in the mosque of al-Haram. On the contrary they left Egypt in due time for Medina in the company of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, while Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah remained in Egypt. Meanwhile 'Abd ar-Rahman

ibn ‘Udays a1-Balwi [196] accompanied by five-hundred Egyptians left for Medina in the month of Rajab, spreading the rumor that they intended to go on pilgrimage.

When ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh, governor of Egypt, learnt of this matter, he quickly sent a messenger to Medina, reporting to the caliph the departure of ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn ‘Udays and his friends for Medina, and stating that Muhammad ibn Abi Hudhayfah had seen them off as for as ‘Ajrud, while they had spread the rumor that they intend to make a pilgrimage to Mecca, whereas they have secretly told their friends that their departure was for the purpose of uprising against ‘Uthman and his overthrow or even death.

‘Abd Allah’s messenger covered the distance between Egypt and Medina in eleven nights and carried the message. Meanwhile the Egyptians proceeded towards Medina without halting and reached Dhu Khushub near that city and stayed there.

According to another narration ‘Abd Allah, after getting permission from ‘Uthman left his seat of government following the Egyptians, and when he reached Ilah, he was informed that the Egyptians had besieged ‘Uthman in Medina and Muhammad bin Abi Hudhayfah has risen in his absence from Egypt. So he thought it expedient to return to Egypt to preserve his rule there.

On the other hand when Muhammad ibn Abi_Hudhayfah learnt of the success of the Egyptians in Medina and their siege of ‘Uthman, he took the opportunity of ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh’s absence and with the aid of his followers he rose and easily took control of Egypt, and the people willingly accepted his rule.

When ‘Abd Allah reached Egypt, his entry was checked by Muhammad and when he realized that he was faced with an accomplished fact, he decided to give up his rule over Egypt and went straight to Palestine and stayed there until ‘Uthman’s assassination.

at-Tabari, quoting az-Zubayr, writes [197]: The Egyptians wrote a letter to ‘Uthman from as-Suqya or Dhu Khushub which was delivered by one of them. But ‘Uthman gave no answer and Ordered to expel the messenger in degradation from

the palace. The Egyptians who had turned against ‘Uthman were six hundred in number and were divided into four groups, each under a commander, and ‘Amr ibn Badil (a companion of the Prophet) and ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn Udays jointly acting as commander-in-chief.

The text of the letter written to ‘Uthman by the Egyptians is as follows:

"In the name of God, the Beneficent the Merciful.

As for the subject to remember that Allah does not change the conditions of a people until they change their own condition[198]*. Therefore we take God as witness and warn you from His wrath.*

God has granted you this world. Therefore do not mar your next world, since you should not ignore your share in the hereafter and be forgetful of it.

Remember that we are enraged only in the way of God's satisfaction and will only be pleased for His sake and now that we have risen in His way, we will not sheath our drawn swords and keep quiet unless you openly repent your past deeds and clarify your position for us.

We have thus informed you of our words and demands and God aids us in facing you.

That is all."

‘Uthman concludes a pact with the rebels

al-Baladhuri writes [199]: al-Mughayrah ibn Shu'bah asked ‘Uthman to give him leave to contact the Egyptians and inquire into their demands. The caliph gave him permission and when al-Mughayrah approached the Egyptians' camp, they cried out: "0 you one-eyed blind man! Go back, you shameless one! Go back, you wicked fellow!"

So al-Mughayrah had to return. ‘Uthman summoned ‘Amr ibn al-'As and said to him: "Go and meet this group and invite them towards the Book of God and we will meet their wishes."

Amr approached the Egyptians and greeted them and they replied: "May God remove your health from you! 0 enemy of God goes back! 0 son of Nabighah, go back!, we neither trust you nor can your grace be trusted."

‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Umar and some of those present said to ‘Uthman: "The only person who can carry out this mission is ‘Ali

ibn Abi_Talib." When 'Ali came, 'Uthman said to him: "O Abu al-Hasan! Contact these people and invite them to the Book of God and His prophet's traditions!"

'Ali answered: "I accept this task only on condition that you promise me and take God to witness that you will fulfill whatever I promise them on your behalf."

'Uthman said: "I accept." So 'Ali took his promise and his oath upon God's testimony, which were the strongest he could secure, and then departed. When he faced the Egyptians, they cried out: "Go back, 'Ali!" But 'Ali said: "No! I come forward and promise acting upon the Book of God and the fulfillment of your demands." Then he explained what had taken place between him and 'Uthman and promised that 'Uthman would fulfill his promise. The Egyptians asked: "Do you guarantee it?" He said:
'Yes." So they said: "If this is so, we agree." Then some of the chiefs and dignitaries of Egypt accompanied by 'Ali entered Medina and went to 'Uthman's house. They explained their purpose and reproached the caliph. 'Uthman did not refute any of their objections and admitted all of them, and undertook to remedy them. The Egyptian deputies asked him to express it in writing and give it to them for a greater assurance. Re agreed and wrote the following pact in his own handwriting:

"In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

This is an agreement that 'Uthman servant of God and Commander of the Faithful writes for that group of believers and Muslims who have been irritated with him, and he undertakes:

1-To act henceforth according to the Book of God and the Prophet's tradition.

2-To reimburse the salaries of those, which I have stopped.

3-To give grace to those who fear my rage and safeguard their freedom.

4-To bring back the exiled to their families

5-To abstain from keeping the soldiers at the frontiers for a long time,,

6-To divide the spoils of war among the warriors without any scruple or exception.

'Ali_ ibn Abi Talib acts on behalf of 'Uthman towards the believers and Muslims as a guarantor for the fulfillment of all these commitments.

The following persons testify the correctness of the above commitments.
1-az-Zubayr ibn al-'Awam
2-Talhah ibn 'Ubayd Allah
3-Sa'd ibn Malik Abi Waqqas
4-'Abd Allah ibn 'Uinar
5-Zayd ibn Tha bit
6-Sahl ibn Hunayf
7-Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd.
Dated: Dhual-Qa'dah, 35 of the Hijrah."
Then each group took a copy of the above pact and returned.

Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr
and governorship of Egypt

The accounts given by al-Baladhuri and others show that in addition to the above pact, 'Uthman gave another document to the Egyptians in which he dismissed 'Abd Allah ibn' Sa'd ibn Abi Sarh from the governorship of Egypt and replaced him by Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr.

al-Baladhuri writes: Talhah 'A'ishah's cousin stood up and spoke harshly to 'Uthman. 'A'ishah, too, sent 'Uthman a message to give the right of the Egyptians with the dismissal of 'Abd Allah from his position as governor of Egypt. At this time 'Ali entered and spoke on behalf of the Egyptians, saying:

"These people want you to remove 'Abd Allah from his position and appoint another person in his place. They accuse 'Abd Allah of having spilled an innocent person's blood too. Dismiss him and judge between them. If the accusation is true and 'Abd Allah has committed such a crime, administer God's law in his case and redress their right."

'Uthman said to the Egyptians: "You yourself choose someone as governor of Egypt and I will issue the decree."

A group of the Egyptians made signs to each other nominating Muhammad son of Abi Bakr, and eventually asked 'Uthman to issue the decree for his governorship.[200]

'Uthman accepted the proposal and issued a decree in Muhammad's name, and commissioned a number of the Emigrants and Ansar to act as supervisors in this change of governorship between him and 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abu

Sarh, and at the same time to investigate the claim of the Egyptians against ʽAbd Allah, and report their findings to ʽUthman.

In this way both sides separated in perfect peace and reconciliation and the Egyptians returned to Egypt from Medina, fully satisfied with their mission.

ʽAli abandons his support for ʽUthman

> *ʽUthman! I swear* to *God that lam certain that Marwan will bring about your annihilation and then cannot save you.*
>
> ***Imam ʽAli***

ʽUthman's political repentance

When peace and reconciliation were made between the Egyptians and ʽUthman with the efforts and mediation of Imam ʽAli, concluded a pact under-taking to fulfill their wishes and after they returned fully satisfied, the Imam said to ʽUthman:

"Now stand up and speak to the people, informing them of your intentions and take God as witness to your sincere return and repentance; for, the conditions in most cities of Islam are wretched and convulsive, and everyone speaks of you and your conduct, and this time it is feared that the Kufans will rise in rebellion against you. Now you will turn to me to go and speak with them. But in such a case I will be unable to undertake such a task and they will accept no excuse from me. It could also be that the people of Basra may rise against you, and then if you ask me to go and negotiate with them and if I refuse to do so, you may accuse me of having broken the ties of relationship with you and of having trifled with your right."

ʽUthman rose and went to the mosque, delivering a sermon expressing regret and repentance, saying: "O people! I swear to God, I was aware of everything you criticized me for, and all I had done. I did everything with full knowledge, and never acted ignorantly. But so far I have been badly misled by my inner whims and desires and facts were shown me in an inverted way, ultimately leading me astray, and turning me away from truth

and rightfulness.

I myself heard the Prophet say: Whoever is involved in a blunder, should repent, and anyone who commits a sin, should repent, and let not himself wander in deviation, and if he continues his injustice, he will belong to that group who have turned away from the path of truth altogether.

Now when I descend from the pulpit your leaders and dignitaries may come to me and state their proposals. I swear to God that I shall comply with their rightful wishes. There is no way which does not reach God, and all return to Him.

Let your select ones not turn away from proximity to me, and let them know that if my right hand does not obey them, my left hand will submit to them."

The people were moved with compassion at 'Uthman's words and some of them even wept for his helplessness. At this time Sa'id ibn Zayd said to him:

"O commander of the faithful! No one feels more compassion for you than I. Therefore, think of yourself and act upon what you have promised."

Marwan's obstruction

When 'Uthman descended the pulpit and entered his house, he saw Marwan and Sa'id and some of the Umayyads waiting for him. They had not attended the sermon in the mosque.

When 'Uthman sat down, Marwan turned to him and said:

"Would the Commander of the Faithful permit me to say something?"

Na'ilah 'Uthman's wife, interrupted and said: "No! You had better say nothing and remain silent." Then she continued: "By God, the conditions are so tense and confused that people will rebel against him and kill him, too and make orphans of his children. In regard to the existing conditions he has made promises that would not be advisable not to keep."

Marwan who was taken aback at this untimely meddlesomeness, turned to Na'ilah and said sharply: "What has it got to do with you? Your father departed this world when he could not even perform his ablution properly!"

Na'ilah shouted angrily: "Keep quiet, Marwan! You speak of fathers, and say something of my dead father, and lie about

him. Rather it is your father whom no one can talk good about him. I swear to God that if your father were not ‘Uthman’s uncle and naturally the evil of an uncle is bound to affect his nephew, I would say something to you which you could never deny?”

Marwan was compelled to turn away from her and then turning to ‘Uthman repeated his former request to speak, and’ ‘Uthman gave him leave to do so. Marwan said: “May you accept the blessings of my parents. How fine would it have been for you to utter those words when you possessed power and ability and when you were not so humble and abject. Then I would have been the first person to be pleased and to support you, and would even have aided you in that declaration. But alas! You uttered those words at a time when everything had quickened down and there was left no sign of the tumultuous torrent of your threatening power but foams mingled with straw on the earth. You stretched your arm of imploration towards them in complete abjectness and humility, and surrendered to them in full humbleness and helplessness. I swear to God that if you insist upon a sin for which you beg only God’s forgiveness, it would be far better than confessing your impotence to the people and expressing your repentance. If you wished to win people’s favour with your repentance, there was no need to confess your errors and sins. It is because of this expression of impotence and confession of your b1unders that people have converged into masses threatening you.

‘Uthman said to Marwan: “Go out and speak to them, for, I feel ashamed of talking to them!”

Marwan went out. The people had gathered there to state their wants and needs. When Marwan appeared at the door, he faced the crowd and said: “What is going on? Have you come for plunder? Shame on you! I see that everyone has brought his friend with him, but not those whom I expected to see! What is wrong? Have you sharpened your teeth for our government? The way you have rushed upon us shows that you intend to seize it from us! Go away! I swear to God that if you intend to attack us, you will receive such a punishment that you never expected and it will cost you heavily. What stupid people you are! Go back to your homes. You are wrong! We have never

retreated before you, and will never surrender our power and rule!”

‘Uthman’s prudent wife

The people were perplexed at what they had heard the caliph promise an hour before, and what they were hearing now. What a difference between these two! It was difficult to find an answer. Some people went to ‘Ali and informed him of what had occurred. ‘Ali entered upon ‘Uthman in great anger and said:

“Have you not yet put Marwan aside? Does he not still leave you alone? Does he intend to remove from you your religion and intelligence? And you move on like an abject and poor camel with a bent head towards wherever you are dragged? I swear to God that Marwan has neither a true faith, nor a sound common sense. swear to God from what I see that Marwan will bring about your annihilation, and then cannot save you. You have trampled upon your honour and prestige, and you are captivated by the destiny of your conduct and deeds. I will not come here again and will have nothing to do with you, and will not blame you for your deeds.”

When ‘Ali left ‘Uthman’s house in that state of mind Na’ilah ‘Uthman’s wife, asked permission to speak when he gave her leave, she said: “I heard what ‘Ali said. He will not come here again. You have placed your hand in Marwan’s hand and let him drag you wherever he wants.”

‘Uthman said: “What do you think I should do?”

Na’ilah said: “Fear God Almighty, and follow the ways of Abu Bakr and ‘Umar. If you obey Marwan, he will cause your death eventually. Marwan, has no worth in people’s eyes, and it is because of him that they have turned away from you. Send someone to ‘Au and invite him for reconciliation. He is your relative and people have seen no injustice from him.”

‘Uthman sent someone for ‘Ali but he abstained from coming and said: “I have told him that I would not go again.”

Meanwhile when Marwan learnt of Na’ilah’s words, he went to ‘Uthman sat down and asked permission to speak. ‘Uthman gave him leave and he said: “This Na’ilah, this daughter of al-Farafasah...” but ‘Uthman interrupted him and said: “Don’t speak of her since the consequence will be bad for you. By God,

she is more concerned about me than you are and wishes me well."

Thus Marwan had to remain silent. at-Tabari says in his book(201): 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Aswad speaks of Marwan as follows: May God bring shame on Marwan! 'Uthman came among the people and secured their satisfaction. This closeness with them and the purity of emotion so affected him that involuntarily tears came to his eyes on the pulpit and the people too wept with him. I noticed that his beard had become wet with tears, and at the same time he said: "O God! I beg your forgiveness! I beg your forgiveness! By God, if I were to be a bought slave, I would submit to it and be glad. When I go home, come to me. I swear to God I will no more conceal myself from you, and will not place a sentinel at my door! I will give you your right and even more and will satisfy you more than ever. I promise to keep away from me Marwan and his relatives!"

When 'Uthman went home, he ordered to leave the door open and have no sentinel there. But Marwan went in with him and soon after he made the caliph go back on his word. He deceived him and resorted to such slyness as to dissuade him from his reconciliation with people and his intention to carry out his promises. Consequently 'Uthman did not leave the house for three days feeling ashamed.(202)

On the same day Marwan went out of 'Uthman's house and shouted at the people: "Shame on all of you except a few that I consider as friends. Go back to your houses. If the Commander of the Faithful wishes to see any of you, he will send for you otherwise no one has the right to leave his house."

At this time I was looking for 'Ali. When I entered the mosque I saw him sitting between the Prophet's tomb and his pulpit and Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr and 'Ammar ibn Yasir were sitting by him and reporting the matter of Marwan and his conduct towards the people. When 'Ali saw me, he said:

-Were you in the mosque when 'Uthman delivered his sermon?

I said: "Yes," then 'Ali asked: "Did you hear Marwan's words, too?" I said: 'Yes." 'Ali then said: "May God help the Muslims! If I sit at home and have nothing to do with 'Uthman he will say: "You have disregarded me and my right and my

kinship and have abandoned it. And if I interfere and speak to the people Marwan comes forward and makes a toy of ‘Uthman despite his old age and the fact that he has been associated with the Prophet, and drags him wherever he wishes.”

We were talking when a messenger came from ‘Uthman saying that ‘Uthman wished to see ‘Ali. ‘Ali said loudly: “Tell him that I will neither come to him, nor will I mediate between him and the Muslims.” His messenger returned to report ‘Ali’s words. ‘Abd ar-Rahman ibn al-Aswad continues his narration, saying: Two nights later I saw ‘Uthman coming from some place. I asked Natil ‘Uthman’s slave: “Where does the caliph come from?” He said: “From ‘Ali’s house.”

The following evening I visited ‘Ali who said to me: “Last night ‘Uthman came to my house claiming that he would no more return to the wrong acts of the past and will carry out all he had promised.” I answered: “Did you do so after you spoke to the people from the Prophet’s pulpit and promised them all kinds of assistance and assured them of it all and then went home? Then Marwan came out of your house and abused and insulted the (hopeful) people and hurt their feelings.”

‘Uthman rose in annoyance and on leaving he said: “You have severed your kinship with me and humbled me and turned the people against me!”

‘Ali said: “I swear that I have been more of a friend and supporter to you than anyone else, and have kept you away from people’s molestation. But wherever I humbled myself for your sake Marwan has come up and you, have accepted his words and ignored my efforts and guidance.” ‘Ali says that Then ‘Uthman left for his house.

‘Abd ar-Rahman says: Thenceforth I did not see ‘Ali having anything more to do with the business of the caliphate or defend it as he had done before.(203)

‘Uthman is besieged

God knows that I noticed in ‘Ali’s visage signs of pity and compassion for ‘Uthman.

Ibn ‘Abbas

We read that Imam ‘Ali repeatedly and sincerely stood up to save ‘Uthman and negotiated with his representatives from one side and the oppressed people as the other side as mediator, in order to quench the fire of revolution and keep the caliph immune. But despite all his efforts, whenever, ‘Uthman promised to fulfill the wishes of the people and put an end to the domination of the Umayyads oppressors over the life and property of the Muslims, he was led astray by his unwise the Umayyads companions headed by Marwan. Thus he would break his promises, with the consequence that renewed riots began once again and ‘Uthman had to call on ‘Ali to his aid. But the weakness and incapability’s of ‘Uthman went so far that the Imam had to abstain from further aid and leave the caliph to himself to deal with the situation and let him and his adviser Marwan and other Umayyad chiefs reach an agreement with the people who had besieged him to secure their rights and see justice done, and accepted no promise but his abdication.

‘Ikrimah, quoting Ibn ‘Abbas describes as follows the account of ‘Uthman’s siege: They besieged ‘Uthman twice. The first time he was in siege by the Egyptians for twelve days which ended with the mediation of ‘Ali at Dhu Khushub. I swear to God that ‘Ali endeavored with perfect sincerity to save ‘Uthman and spared no effort in this way until they vexed him with ‘Uthman. The reason was that Marwan, Sa’id and their relatives instigated ‘Uthman against ‘Ali and he believed their words and even confirmed them. They said to him: “If only ‘Ali desires, no one dares to approach and criticize you.”

Meanwhile, ‘Ali gave advice to ‘Uthman and guided him and spoke harshly of Marwan and his relatives with him. They, in their turn, were uneasy at this conduct of ‘Ali and said to ‘Uthman: “Though you are his Imam and leader and have priority over him and are his cousin and near of kin, he speaks thus to your face. Then what would he not say behind your

back?!"

They uttered so many remarks of this kind to 'Uthman that at last 'Ali broke off his contact with him and abstained from cooperating with him.

Ibn 'Abbas said: On the day that I left Medina for Mecca, I visited 'Ali and told him that I was ordered by 'Uthman to go to Mecca. 'Ali said: " 'Uthman does not really wish anyone to advise him. He has collected round him a number of mean and ill-natured individuals who have seized some lands and earmarked their taxes and tributes for themselves, plundering the products of people's labors." I answered: "Owing to his kinship with us it would be right and fitting that you should rise to defend him and no excuse is acceptable from you m this matter!"

Ibn 'Abbas concludes, saying: "God knows that I noticed in 'Ali's visage signs of pity and compassion for 'Uthman, and at the same time I saw that this matter was too heavy for him "(204)

'Ikrimah says also: One Friday, 'Uthman climbed the pulpit of the mosque and praised God the Almighty. At this moment a man rose and exclaimed to 'Uthman: "If you are truthful, make the Book of God your guide and carry out its decrees."

'Uthman told him to sit down and he did so. But he stood up again and protested. 'Uthman told him again to sit down and he did so. But he stood up again and protested. 'Uthman told him again to sit down. At last he ordered to force him to sit down. Meantime differences arose among the people and they began to attack each other with pebbles so insistently that the air was full of them, with the result that 'Uthman fell down unconscious from the pulpit, and they carried him home. At this time one of his servants came out of the house, carrying a Qur'an and recited the following verse aloud [205]

"Surely they who divided their religion into parts and became sects, you have no concern with them; their affair is only with Allah, then He will inform them of what they did."

'Ali hurried to 'Uthman's house and found him unconscious and surrounded by the Umayyads. He asked what had happened. They said: " 'Ali! You have brought death upon us and caused this to the caliph! By God! If you attain your wish, we will make this world a bitter place for you!"

When ‘Ali heard this remark, he left ‘Uthman’s house in great anger and annoyance.

‘Ikrimah also says (206): The people of Medina wrote to ‘Uthman describing his misdeeds and insistently demanded his repentance. They had sworn that they would not give up unless he acts upon what is prescribed by God, and grant it to them, otherwise they would kill him.

‘Uthman who was frightened for his life discussed the matter with his wife, children and Umayyads companions saying to them: “You see that I am placed under pressure from every side and the sparks of public rebellion surround me intensely. What can I do?”

They all suggested that ‘Ali should be sent for to talk with the people and make promises to them and treat them leniently until reinforcement is provided to support him.

‘Uthman said: “The people will no longer be deceived and they won’t accept any excuses. The first time I made promises to them I did not act up on them. This time they are bound to seize a divine pact from me and demand a survey, and if I agree, they will want its fulfillment.”

Marwan said: “O commander of the faithful! To approach them and secure their approval is better than engaging in conflict with them until you are in a strong position. Promise them whatever they ask, and in your talk with them, be as lenient as you can. Anyway as they have rebelled against you, your pact and promise to them are not so valid and binding!”

‘Uthman agreed and sent for ‘Ali. When he arrived ‘Uthman said to him: “You have seen what the people have done and what I did. You also know my situation. I do not feel secure for my life from this crowd. Use whatever means you can to ward off their evil from me! May Great God be a surety that I will give them whatever they want from me and my relatives, even if my blood is shed in the process.”

Ali replied: “The people require your justice more than your blood. You should know that behind this door and against you I have seen a people who will by no means speak of agreement and compromise with you until their right is secured. You had concluded a pact with them and took God as witness to abandon your past acts which had been the main factor of their rage.

And I calmed them down because of the promises you made. But you have not acted upon any items of your promise. Do not try to deceive me this time, and do not feel happy with something chimerical. For, if I decide to get in touch with them this time, I shall judge according to the exigency of right and justice and will grant them their right."

'Uthman said: "I accept. Make promises to them. I swear to God that I will fulfill them."

'Ali came out and said to the people: "You have asked for your right, and you have secured it. 'Uthman has accepted and promised to observe right and justice towards you on behalf of himself and others, and to abstain from whatever is contrary to your wish. Believe his words, and emphatically ask him to fulfill them."

The people said: "We agree, but give us some assurances for we do not trust his words without action!"

'Ali said: "You are right," and then he went back to 'Uthman and informed him of what had taken place. 'Uthman said:

"Arrange for a reprieve between us by which I may comply with their demands. For, I do not have the power to fulfill all their wishes in one day."

'Ali said: "The matters which are related to Medina require no reprieve, but as for other cities the grace period is the time when your instruction reaches them."

'Uthman answered: "that is true. Nevertheless ask for three days' grace even about what is related to Medina."

'Ali said: "Very well", and then went Out and informed the people. Then a pact was concluded between them and 'Uthman to the effect that he would redress the rights of the oppressed within three days, and remove the agents who are disliked by the people. In that pact he had called God to witness the strongest agreement which could be received from a servant and the fulfillment of his promise. It was testified by a group of Emigrant and Ansar chiefs. Thus the Muslims ended their antagonism to 'Uthman and went away hoping for the fulfillment of the pact.

But with the dispersion of the crowd 'Uthman did not remain idle, and instead of granting their demands, he was engaged in collecting forces and war equipment for confronting

the people, and formed a large army with the captives who belonged to the government.

When the three days' grace was over and there came. no sign of the fulfillment of 'Uthman's promises, nor of the removal of any of his agents, the people rose up in rebellion once more. 'Amr ibn Hazm al-Ansari informed the Egyptians at Dhu Khushub of the non-fulfillment of 'Uthman's promises, and a fresh revolution. They accompanied him to Medina, and sent deputies to 'Uthman. When they entered, they said: "Have you not repented your past deeds, and promised upon God's testimony to abstain from whatever has roused the people's rage and hatred?"

'Uthman said: "Yes, and I still uphold that pact." They said.:
"If this is so, what is this letter that you have written about us to 'Abd Allah, your agent in Egypt? We have seized it from your messenger!"

He said: "I have done nothing and I know nothing of what you say.

They said: "Your messenger was riding your special camel, and the letter is in the handwriting of your secretary and bears your seal as a caliph!"

He said: "As for the camel, it may have been stolen. Moreover two handwritings may look alike and the signature or the seal may be forgery!"

They said: "we are not hasty in your affairs, though we consider you as accused. Nevertheless, we ask you to remove the evil of your debauchee agents from us, and place as governor over us someone whose hands are not polluted with our life and property."

He said: "What a position would I have if I remove an agent that you dislike and appoint someone as governor that you like? In that case everything will be in accordance with your order; and I will be a good-for-nothing fellow!"

They said: "By God! You must either do these things or retire as caliph. If you show my resistance we will kill you. Think well and fear for your life!"

He said: "Forget this idea that I would relinquish my position as caliph. I shall never disrobe myself from the garment, which God has placed on my body!"

A strange letter

Cut off their heads and their hands, and let them write in their blood, and then hang their bodies on date-palms.

A letter from ‘Uthman to the governor, of Egypt

Now let us see what was the strange letter of which the Egyptians spoke as a definite evidence of the caliph’s revelation of his promise and his obstinacy, and how it came into their hands.

If you remember, the first time that ‘Uthman was besieged by the Egyptians, he showed a desire to make peace with them through ‘Ali’s mediation, and repented his past deeds. The Egyptians, too, on their part promised not to molest him on condition that he should be just to them and remove ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d ibn Abi Sarh and replaced by Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr as governor of Egypt and dispatched a number of Emigrants and Ansar there to investigate the Egyptians’ complaints of the dismissed governor.

The Egyptians accompanied these supervisors of ‘Uthman’s reform project to Egypt and when they reached Ilah(207) or a few miles near it, they noticed a rider behind them proceeding in the same direction. They inquired as to his identity and destination. The rider who was a black man, introduced himself as ‘Uthman’s slave, and èaid he was carrying a verbal message for ‘Abd Allah ibn Sa’d, governor of Egypt.

Some of the Egyptians thought it advisable to search him in case ‘Uthman had issued an order contrary to expectation to ‘Abd Allah. When they found nothing in his baggage they decided to leave him alone. But Kinanah ibn Bishr said: “By God! I won’t let you act so carelessly until I search inside his water-skin.” They said: “God be praised! Could it be possible that he has got something there?” He answered: “People’s cunning takes different forms, and one is not secure from slyness and deceit.”

Then he untied the water-skin and poured down the contents and suddenly a bottle fell out in which there was a lead pipe inside which there was a letter containing the following points:

"When 'Amr ibn Badil comes to you, seize him and cut off his head, and cut off the hands of Ibn Udays, Kinanah and 'Urwah and let them writhe in their blood until they die! After their death hang their bodies on date-palms."

When the Egyptians read the contents, they said: "It is now lawful to spill 'Uthman's blood." They turned back towards Medina, met 'Ali and narrated the matter and gave 'Uthman's letter to him.

'Ali showed the letter to 'Uthman and asked him what he meant by it. 'Uthman swore that he had neither written the letter, nor did he know of it. He added: "The handwriting is my secretary's, and the seal resembles mine!" 'Ali asked: "Whom do you suspect then? Whom do you accuse?"

'Uthman answered: "I accuse you and my secretary!" According to another narration he said: "I accuse you since the people obey you and you do not disperse them from around me!"

'Ali in great anger went out and as he was leaving he turned to 'Uthman and said: "Maybe it was your own order."

It is also said that the Umayyads said to 'Ali on that occasion: "O'Ali! You have ruined us and incited the people to revolt against us!" 'Ali answered: "You stupid fools! How could I have a hand in this when I dispersed the people from around 'Uthman and many times tried to adjust his affairs? What else can I do?" Then he turned back and leaving he said: "O God! You know that lam innocent of what they attribute to me. If meanwhile 'Uthman's blood is shed, I have no responsibility at all."

The caliph's seal was usually kept by Hamran [(208)] and when he was exiled to Basra by 'Uthman he took it from him and gave it to Marwan. It is also said about the letter which was seized by the Egyptians that Marwan as the caliph's seal-keeper had a direct hand in it and 'Uthman had no knowledge of it.

When the Egyptians showed the letter to 'Uthman he denied his knowledge of it and said: "It is a forgery!" They said: "Is it not in your secretary's handwriting?" He said: "It is but he who has written it without my order." They said: "Your slave has been its messenger!" He said: "It is true, but he has left Medina without my permission."

They said: "But he was riding your special camel." He said:

"The camel must have been taken without my knowledge and leave."

They said: "There are two alternatives: either you are telling the truth, or lying and this is your own doing! If this letter is written to 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Sarh and you are lying, you deserve being deposed since you have given this order to shed our blood without having any reason for it. But if you are telling the truth and know nothing of the letter and of your slave and camel, then you deserve removal from the caliphate on account of your weakness and negligence about the affairs and allowing your wicked relations to interfere in the affairs of the Muslims; for it is not proper and advisable to have you as Emir and leader when others make use of your weakness and ignorance." They added: "You have during you rule unjustly lashed a number of the Prophet's friends and companions and other Muslims only on the charge of advising and guiding you and for reminding you to return towards right and justice. Now the time has come for you to prepare yourself for punishment!"

'Uthman answered: "Firstly even an Imam and leader may occasionally blunder, but I shall never place myself at your disposal for punishment; for, if I were to pay personally the punishment of every innocent and oppressed person, I myself would be destroyed."(209)

The Egyptians said: "You have committed many great and undesirable misdeeds, each of which alone deserves your deposal, and when you have been spoken to you have uttered a verbal repentance and expressed regret and penitence for your conduct. But contrary to all expectations you have fallen back on the same and similar deeds and violated your repentance. When we have come to you to redress our rights and do justice, you have resorted again to regret and repentance to keep our minds away from the subject. At that time Muhammad ibn Muslamah severely reproached our conduct towards you but at the same time he guaranteed the fulfillment of your promise. But when this time you summoned him for mediation between us and yourself, he refused your request, and kept away from you, and said: 'I will no longer interfere in his business.' Anyhow on the first occasion we yielded and returned to give you no excuse, and waited hopefully for the fulfillment of your

promises and relying on Great God-Whom you took as witness. But after all that repentance and affability and to our great astonishment we found a letter written by you to your agent about killing us and cutting off our hands and hanging our bodies. Now you pretend that you know nothing of it, whereas that order was carried by your slave riding your personal camel and in the handwriting of your secretary and bearing your seal as a caliph.

Now in view of what we have seen of you in the past and of the injustice of your verdicts, of earmarking public funds for yourself and your relatives, and the fact that you expressed regret and repentance and violated it and have fallen back on your former deeds, no one but you can resort to such ugly deeds, which are contrary to right and conscience.

On the first occasion we let you free, which was a wrong decision. For we should then have removed you from your position, and replaced you by one of the Prophet's friends who, unlike you, had committed no wrong and had not been tarnished with accusation.

Now leave to us the position of caliphate and retire, since this retirement is the most peaceful solution which will benefit both parties."

'Uthman said: "Have you nothing more to say, and have you said all you want?" They said: "Yes!" then 'Uthman continued: "After praising God, let me say that you have disregarded justice and fairness in your words, and have hastily issued a verdict which is far from right and equity.

When you say that I should retire, you should know that I shall never remove from my body the garment that God has placed on it, and will never put aside the task by which He has honoured me and selected me out of all people. But I repent and abandon misconducts, and will never engage in actions which are disposed by the Muslims; for, I swear to God that I desire His favour and fear His wrath."

The Egyptians said: "If this were the first time you had blundered and then repented and were steadfast in your repentance and did not resume your misdeeds, it would have been incumbent upon us to accept your proposal and leave you alone. You are well aware that despite your many wrong deeds

in the past, we accepted your first repentance and did ‘not molest you, having no more anxiety and never supposing that you would write something against us to your agent, ordering our death, as you have done and as it is proved by your letter. Now what assurance can we have about you and your conduct, while we have tested you and found you to be perfidious? You do not repent a sin without committing that sin again. You should realize now that we will not return without deposing you and replacing you by someone else. If your followers and relatives decide to confront and massacre us, we will resist and fight them to death until we overcome and kill your or be killed in the process.

‘Uthman answered: “As for my abandoning my position as ruler, it is an impossible thing; for, even if you hang me, it would be far easier to give up the position which God has granted’ me as caliph. As for your claim that you will fight those who aid me in killing you, I do not order anyone to fight you, and if meanwhile someone rises in my support, it is not I who have given such an order. Upon my life, if I intended to fight you, I would have issued a written instruction to the Islamic armies about this matter and would have filled Medina with soldiers and warriors, or I would have sought refuge in Egypt or Iraq. Nevertheless, think of yourselves and if you have no pity for my life, fear for your own; for, if you shed my blood, much bloodshed will follow!”

When the Egyptian deputies departed, ‘Uthman summoned Muhammad ibn Muslamah and asked him to bring back the Egyptians. Muhammad answered: “By God I cannot lie to them twice in one year!”

al-Baladhurj writes [210] The Egyptians were within twelve miles of Medina when they saw the caliph’s messenger hurriedly going towards Egypt. When they found the letter Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr held a session in the presence of the Emigrants and Ansar and read the letter to them, the content of which was as follows: “When Ibn Abi Bakr and so and so came to you, use every trick in order to kill them, and destroy the writ of Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr’s governorship and until my next notice keep your position as governor, and imprison anyone who intends to come and complain to me.

When the Egyptians heard the content of the letter, they were full of rage and fury, and hastily returned to Medina. Muhammad first got a few of his companions to put their seals on the letter, and when they reached Medina, they assembled 'Ali, Talhah, az-Zubayr, Sa'd and all the Prophet's companions and narrated the story of 'Uthman's messenger and the letter, and recited its contents to them. When the session was over, not one of those present was left who did not express his vexation and hatred at this lowly action of 'Uthman and this matter added to the painful reminiscences about Ibn Mas'ud, 'Ammar ibn Yasir and Abu Dharr, enhanced their range and dislike towards 'Uthman.

The companions departed for their homes, feeling exceedingly vexed at these successive events and at 'Uthman's attitude and his letter about the Muslims.

The people besieged 'Uthman and Ibn Abi Bakr assisted by Talhah asked the aid of the Banu Taym tribe and others for a clash with 'Uthman, and meanwhile 'A'ishah continued to hurt 'Uthman with her bitter tongue.

It is stated in al-Bad'u wa at-tarikh (2 11) Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Talhah, az-Zubayr and 'A'ishah were among the most stubborn opponents of 'Uthman. The Emigrants and Ansar too left 'Uthman alone and had nothing to do with him and were completely indifferent towards the difficulty that had arisen for him. In the mosque 'A'ishah protested to 'Uthman and enumerated his misdeeds, and by exhibiting a hair of the Prophet and his robe and shoes to the crowd cried out: "How soon you have ignored and forgotten the way and tradition of the Prophet!"

When 'Uthman heard these words, he began to speak ill of Abu Bakr's household, and uttered many abuses and was so enraged that he did not know what to say.

The leaders of the opposition against 'Uthman were three members of the Banu Taym tribe, namely 'A'ishah, her brother Muhammad and her cousin Talhah. As historians write, many times there occurred very sharp and violent clashes between 'A'ishah and 'Uthman. For instance al-Ya'qubi writes in his book of history (212): 'Uthman was speaking on the pulpit the Prophet would give sermons when 'A'ishah suddenly held one of

the Prophet's shirts and showing it, cried out loudly: "O Muslims! This is the Prophet's garment which is not yet old and worn Out. But so soon has 'Uthman forgotten and abandoned the way and tradition of the Prophet!"

'Uthman who was taken aback at the unexpected outcry of 'A'ishah felt obliged to resort to the Qur'an. So he recited the following verse of the Qur'an in answer to her:

"If Thou turn not away their (women) device from me, I will yearn towards them and become one of the ignorant. "(213)

'A'ishah's historical verdict

Kill 'Uthmnan, this stupid, Jewish old man, since he has become an infidel.
'A'ishah

'A'ishah who had a deep rancor for 'Uthman and wished Talhah, her cousin, to take over the leadership, made utmost use of people's rebellion and siege of 'Uthman and issued her historical verdict for his death.

Ibn A'tham writes about this matter in his book (214): When 'A'ishah realized that the people were determined unanimously to kill 'Uthman, she addressed him like this: "O 'Uthman! You misused the Muslims' public fund for yourself, and gave the Umayyads a free hand over their life and property and appointed them to governmental posts, and thus placed the ummah of Muhammad in straitened circumstances. May God seize from you heavenly favour and blessing.(215) If it were not for the fact that you pray five times a day like other Muslims, they would have cut off your head like a camel.!"

When 'Uthman heard her words, he recited the following verse of the Qur'an (216):

"Allah sets forth an example to *those who disbelieve the wife of Noah and the wife of Loot; they were both wives of two of Our righteous servants, but they acted treacherously towards them,* so *they availed them naught against Allah, and it was said:*
Enter both the fire will those who enter."(217)

Thus with this smashing verse 'Uthman answered 'A'ishah,

who was a hot-tempered and unruly woman and could never control herself in anger.

This answer of ‘Uthman and his letter which was seized by her brother on the way to Egypt in which order had been given for the death of himself and his companions, roused ‘A’ishah who was devoted to her relations, so violently that she openly and daringly issued the verdict for ‘Uthman’s death and his infidelity.

She cried out: “Kill this “Na’thal’ for his infidelity.”[218] As soon as these words were uttered by her, they acted as a flame to a heap of dry grass and were repeated by each person to another. This verdict was quoted by all those who never expected it and dared not utter it for their fear of the Quraysh leaders in Medina.

Now let us see what the word “Na’thal’ means. The following are the meanings of the word ‘Na’thal” as found in the dictionary:

1-A male hyena

2-Stupid and ignorant old man.

3-In Egypt: a man with a long beard had this name.

4-In Medina: a Jew who had such a name and ‘Uthman was likened to him.

It should be said that to ‘A’ishah who was very intelligent, not only was this word familiar in its various meanings, but also owing to her natural eloquence and fluency of expression she concentrated all its meanings in that short and decisive sentence and flung it like a deadly arrow straight at ‘Uthman to remain as a lasting stain on him and his character.

That short sentence was used by the enemies of ‘Uthman as a maxim, and even after the caliph was overthrown and killed on the basis of that very verdict, the word “Na’thal” continued to be used for a long time by his enemies, and has been recorded in history.

al-A’war ash-Shanni speaks of it in his poem as follows [219]

“I am wearied of both Na’thal ‘Uthman and son of Sakhr, Mu’awiyah.”

Muhammad ibn Abi Siarah ibn Abj Zuhayr al-Qurayshi says in his poem [220]:

“We killed Na’thal ‘Uthman in the name of tradition when he

checked the advance of our glittering banners!"

And when 'Amr ibn al-'As recited the following line in the battle of Siffin:

"Bring back to us our master (meaning 'Uthman) as he was,"

The Iraqis answered him as follows:

"The swords of Madhhaj and Hamdan prevented Na'thal 'Uthman from returning safe and sound."

'Amr ibn al-'As exclaimed again:

"Restore to us our master, and that is enough for us."

The Iraqis answered [(221)]:

"How can we restore Na'thal to you now that he has gone rotten and decayed?"

A survey of 'A'ishah's verdict

Although before 'A'ishah's issue of the verdict for killing 'Uthman there existed a slight hope of reconciliation and compromise between him and the people through the mediation of 'Ali and others, yet with her explicit order there was an end to that hope and 'Uthman's death became inevitable.

We know that 'A'ishah had secured that strong position since the time of the two elder caliphs; for they showed such a respect and homage to her and consulted her in high matters that she found an exalted rank in the Muslims' eyes.

Moreover, what enhanced the effect of her verdicts and orders, was her particular opportunism and the perfect readiness of its enforcers. For example she issued the order for 'Uthman's death at a time when there existed a violent difference and conflict between the Umayyad leaders who ruled the land on the one hand and other classes of Muslims on the other and the flames of sedition and riots in various parts oft he country seriously threatened the center and seat of the caliphate. We have narrated some of these events, and avoided further details for the sake of brevity.

The issue of the verdict left two alternatives for all the Muslims including the Prophet's companions and others who wished to carry it out with determination, namely: war or neutrality. For war, too, there existed two ways: either to fight on the caliph's front which was besieged by the people and against them, or to join the ranks of the people and take part in

the revolution against the caliph and his government ‘All ibn Abi Talib and Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas of the council of six remained neutral but Talhah and az-Zubayr took sides with the people and also acted as commanders of the rebels.

Those who called ‘Uthman “Na’thal”

The word “Na’thal” became a publicly used terminology and ‘A’ishah’s verdict about killing ‘Uthman a slogan. Although she is the first person who used that word for ‘Uthman and made it common, but in his life time, too, those who were deeply annoyed with him, used it to his face. One of these people was Jabalah ibn ‘Amr as-Sa’idi (222) at-Tabari writes: Jabalah was standing in front of his house and had a chain in his hand when ‘Uthman passed by him. Jabalah said to him: “0, Na’thal! By God, I will kill you and will put you on a camel and send you straight to hell!”

al-Baladhuri writes: While Jabalah had a chain in his hand ‘Uthman arrived and Jabalah said: “Do you see this chain? I will throw it round your neck, unless you abandon your companions! You have made the market of Medina a fief of al Harith ibn al-Hakam and have done this and that!”

Jabalah’s’ protest to ‘Uthman was due to the fact that ‘Uthman had left the affairs of the market of Medina in the hands of his cousin al-Harith, and the latter bought all the strategic goods which came to Medina, seemingly in the name of the caliph, and then sold them at any price he wished for any profit he desired. In fact he gained huge profit in this way, having no competitor in this process, and no one dared to express any objection.

Moreover al-Harith, owing to his kinship to ‘Uthman, and his position as caliph, enjoyed an extraordinary influence and blackmailed other merchants and committed illegitimate and inhuman acts. The tradesmen and merchants had repeatedly complained to ‘Uthman and had discussed with him the bullying acts of al-Harith to persuade him to cut short the ha rids of his favorite cousin from the control of the Medinan market and remove his molestation of the people there. But ‘Uthman paid no attention to their demands and took no step against al-Harith.

The supporters of 'Uthman and those who considered that their lordship and enormous wealth depended on the people's silence and unquestioned obedience towards the absolute power of the caliph, and in order to preserve that scarecrow, named 'Uthman in power insistently asked Jabalah to abandon his opposition to 'Uthman and not to harp on his misdeeds. But he strongly rejected their suggestions and said: "Yes, by God, I am never prepared to follow your wish, and thereby stand remorsefully and dejectedly of the just threshold of God on Resurrection Day and exclaim: O God! I had no alternative or option but to hear and obey the commands of my chiefs and thus they brought about my unhappiness and perversion.

at-Tabari writes elsewhere: One day 'Uthman passing by a group, greeted them and they returned his salutations. Jabalah was among them and he asked others: "Why did you respond to the greeting of a man who has committed so many misdeeds?" Then he turned to 'Uthman and said: "By God, I will throw this chain round your neck, unless you dismiss your wrongful agents and drive them away.' 'Uthman asked: "Which ones are you speaking of? I swear to God, I have not made anyone my own favorite nor have shown any discrimination."

He said: "How can you make such a claim, while you have made such men as Marwan, Mu'awiyah, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amir ibn Kurayz, 'Abd Allah ibn Sa'd and others favorites and brought them close to your administration? Among them are such individuals of whom the Qur'an speaks reproachfully and whose blood is considered by the Prophet lawful to shed!"

'Abd Allah ibn 'Amir was a cousin of 'Uthman on his mother's side, for, Arwa 'Uthman's mother was the daughter of Kurayz. As to how the governorship of Basra was granted to 'Abd Allah, there is an interesting story connected with it. One day Shabal ibn Khalid, half-brother of Ziyad ibn Abihi and son of Sumayyah Ma'rufah, arrived when the Umayyad chiefs were sitting around 'Uthman and said: "Is there no one among you who desires to be as wealthy as he is? Is there no obscure person among you who wishes to be as famous as he is? Is there no one among you who... Is there no one among you ... that you have had to hand over Iraq as fief to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari (who is not of the Quraysh line and Mudar tribe and belongs to the

Yemen tribes?"[223]

'Uthman who was moved by Shabal's words, immediately granted the governorship of Basra to his sixteen year old cousin, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Amir ibn Kurayz, and removed Abu Musa aTAsh'ari from that position.[224]

at-Tabari quotes Hatib, saying [225]: I was present on the mosque one day, and 'Uthman was Leaning on the Prophet's *staff,* which was held in sermon times by Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and speaking when Jahjah suddenly cried out:

"Na'thal! Descend from the pulpit!"[226]

Abu Habibah says: Jahjah al-Ghifari rose and exclaimed: "O 'Uthman! We have prepared for you a feeble camel, a cloak and a chain! Descend from the pulpit! We will cover you up in the cloak, and put the chain round your neck and mount you on the camel and will send you to the volcano mountain!"

'Uthman said to Jahjah in answer: "May God make you and what you have prepared for me uglier!"

The narrator says: Jahjah did not address these words in private to 'Uthman but he did so in public, and at this time 'Uthman's supporters - and kinsmen surrounded him and took him home. Abu Habibah says: "This was the last time I saw 'Uthman"

It is said that after this incident he did not Leave his house more than one or two times, for, after that he was arrested by the people and assassinated.

'Uthman turns to 'A'ishah for help

When 'Uthman ignored the people's demand and 'A'ishah issued the verdict of his death, the people besieged him. Meanwhile the people of other cities who bad been driven to extremities by the oppression of 'Uthman's agents, after receiving her letters inciting them to rise against the caliph, proceeded to Medina to carry Out her order.[227] Talhah 'A'ishah's cousin, acted as leader of the rebels and issued necessary ordera.[228] There remained no refuge for the caliph now, especially as no hope was left to save his life after the issue of 'A'ishah's verdict. When 'Uthman found himself in this strait, he ordered Marwan ibn al-Hakam and 'Abd ar-Rahman ibn 'Attab[229] to meet 'A'ishah who was preparing herself for pilgrimage to bring

about reconciliation between her and him. These two men went to meet 'A'ishah and said to her: "If you forget your journey and remain in Medina, there is a hope that with the blessing of your presence God may protect this man ('Uthman)." And Marwan added: "The caliph promises to offer you two drachmas for every drachma that you intended to spend for this travel."

'A'ishah answered: "I have packed my baggage and consider this pilgrimage obligatory for myself, and I swear to God that I will not act upon your demand."

'Abd ar-Rahman and Marwan rose in the disappointment of Marwan recited the following lines:

"Qays set fire to a city against me and when the flames rose high and swallowed me, he let me alone."

When 'A'ishah heard this ironical remark of Marwan she said in a serious and determined tone: "Marwan! You imagine that I am in doubt about your master 'Uthman! I swear to God that I long to place him in one of my packets and have the strength to carry it to throw him into the sea!"[280]

'A'ishah left Medina for Mecca, and in that year 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas was appointed as pilgrimage leader by 'Uthman. When Ibn 'Abbas saw 'A'ishah in al-Salsal she said to him: "Ibn 'Abbas I beg you in the name of God not to scatter these people who have revolted against this man ('Uthman) with your reasoning and persuasive tongue, and do not make them waver about this unruly and selfish man. The people have become clear-sighted and distinguish the right. They have gathered together from every city about the matter, which has risen high, I myself saw Talhah having seized the keys of the government treasury. If he assumes the rein of affairs, he will undoubtedly follow the line of his cousin Abu Bakr."

Ibn 'Abbas answered: "But dear mother, if a calamity befalls him and he be killed, the people will not obey anyone but our leader 'Ali."

'A'ishah said hurriedly: "It is enough! I have no intention of arguing with you!"[231]

‘Uthman in siege of Talhah, ‘A’ishah’s cousin

‘Uthman was in siege for forty days and during this time Talhah held the rein of affairs, and performed congregation prayer with the people.

at-Tabari History

Talhah ‘A’ishah’s cousin who was strongly supported by her, was gradually getting the control of the situation and increasing his power and influence until he seized the treasury of public funds and this helped to enhance his power.

On the other hand the siege of ‘Uthman was becoming tighter and his power and influence rapidly diminishing and becoming more limited.([232])

When ‘Uthman found the conditions extremely serious, and his position as caliph wholly unstable, and his life in great danger, he sent ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Harith ibn Nufal a descendant of ‘Abd al-Muttalib to Imam ‘Ali with these lines [(233)]

“If lam to be eaten, eat me yourself; otherwise save me before they tear me to pieces.”

At that time ‘Ali was in Khaybar, not in Medina and the people had gathered round Talhah and received orders from him When ‘Uthman’s messenger arrived and delivered the written message, ‘Ali returned to Medina and went straight to ‘Uthman.

‘Uthman said to him: “I have a right over you in several ways: Islam, brotherhood, family ties, and being the Prophet’s son-in-law. Even if you disregard all these and we suppose ourselves to be living in pagan times, it would be a disgrace for the house of ‘Abd Manaf to have its power and rule seized by a son of Taym tribe (Talhah).”

‘Ali said: “You will soon see!” Saying this, he left ‘Uthman’s house and went to the Prophet’s mosque, and placing his hand on Usamah’s shoulder they proceeded together to Talhah’s house. When they reached its entrance, the uproar and clamor of the people shook the house. ‘Ali managed to reach Talhah and said to him: “Talhah! What is this turmoil that you have

started?”

Talhah answered: “O Abu al-Hasan! You have come too late! Everything is over at your arrival.”

According to another narration, *Ali* said to Talhah: “I ask you for God’s sake to scatter the people from around ‘Uthman!” Talhah answered: “By God I shall never do that unless Banu Umayyah grant people’s right.”

‘Ali said nothing in answer to Talhah, and went out till he reached the treasury and ordered to open its door. But as there was no key at hand, he ordered to break down the door and then poured out everything and began dividing it among the people. The news of this distribution reached Talhah’s house, and the people who had gathered there, wishing to have a share of the public fund left Talhah’s house stealthily and hastened towards ‘Ali and thus Talhah was left alone.

When ‘Uthman heard what ‘Mi had done, he was very pleased, and at this moment Talhah arrived and said to ‘Uthman: “O Commander of the faithful! I beg God’s forgiveness for what I have done. I had an idea in my mind, but God did not favour it and created an obstacle between me and my purpose!”

‘Uthman answered: “I swear to God that you have not come here to repent. You have come because you find yourselves defeated in this process! I leave it to God to avenge this action of yours.!”

Talhah blocks the water from reaching ‘Uthman but ‘Ali provides it for him

at-Tabari writes: ““ ‘Uthman was besieged for forty days and during this time Talhah performed congregational prayer with the people!”(234)

Ansab al-Ashraf al-Baladhuri writes (235): None of the Prophet’s companions showed such opposition to ‘Uthman as Talhah did. Talhah and az-Zubayr had taken control of affairs, and Talhah prevented water from reaching ‘Uthman’s house. ‘Ali who stayed in his own land within a mile of Medina, sent a message to Talhah to let ‘Uthman get water from his own well of Rumah and abstain from making them suffer thirst. But Talhah refused to comply.

at-Tabarj writes (236): When the besiegers tightened their

siege and prevented water from reaching ‘Uthman’s house, ‘Uthman sent someone to ‘Ali, asking for help by supplying him with water. ‘Ali, talked to Talhah, but as the latter evaded giving an answer, ‘Ali, was so enraged that Talhah had no alternative but to agree, and at last water was carried on animals to ‘Uthman’s house.

al-Baladhuri writes [237]: The people besieged ‘Uthman and blocked the way of water to him. So he was forced to come out of the house and ask the people if ‘All was amidst them. They said no; He asked if Sa’d was there, and they gave a negative answer.

‘Uthman remained silent for some moments and then said:

“Is there anyone here to go and tell ‘Ali, to get us water?” When this was reported to ‘Ali, he sent ‘Uthman three water-skins full of water. The Banu Hashim and Banu Umayyah slaves surrounded the water-skins to keep them secure from the rebels. Nevertheless by the time the water reached ‘Uthman’s house, some of these slaves received injuries.[238]

Talhah insists upon ‘Uthman’s assassination

At this time Mujamma’ ibn Jariyah al-Ansari happened to come upon Talhah who asked him: “Mujamma’! What is your master doing?”

Mujamma’ answered: “By God, I believe that you intend to kill him eventually.”

Talhah said sarcastically: “Would the world turn upside down if he is killed?” ‘Abd Allah ibn ‘Ayyash ibn Abi Rabi’ah says [239]: (When ‘Uthman was besieged) one day I visited him and talked with him for an hour. During the conversation ‘Uthman held my hand and asked me to listen to the noise outside his house. Someone was saying:

-What are you waiting for?

Another answered: Wait! He may come back! While we were listening we heard Talhah’s voice asking someone “Where is lbn ‘Udays?” Someone answered: “He is here!”

Ibn ‘Udays went forward and Talhah whispered something in his ear. Ibn ‘Udays returned and said to his friends: “From this moment let not anyone visit ‘Uthman.”

At this moment ‘Uthman said: “O God! Remove the evil of

Talhah from me, for, he has roused and instigated the people against me. I pray to God not to let him benefit from this turmoil but bring about his blood to be shed. He has trodden upon my respect when he had no such right!" Ibn ʽAyyash says:
As I wanted to leave the caliph's house, they stopped me by the order of Ibn ʽUdays until Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr happening to pass by ordered them: "Leave him alone" and then they let me go.

The end for ʽUthman

All are unanimous that ʽUthman's body was left on the *ground for three days until ʽAli_ personally intervened in the matter of its burial.*

a1-Baladhuri

When it was reported to ʽAli that the people are determined to kill ʽUthman, he said to his own sons, al-Hasan and a1-Husayn:
"Take up your swords and stand at ʽUthman's door and do not allow anyone to rush upon the caliph."

They obeyed their father's order and rushed to ʽUthman's house. There was a strange tumult going on around the caliph's house and the people there insisted upon putting an end to ʽUthman's life. At this time a conflict started between the invaders and defenders, coloring their swords with each other's blood. al-Hasan's face was covered in blood in the clash, and the head of Qanbar ʽAli's servant was badly injured.

When Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr saw this, he felt afraid that the Banu Hashim may be so enraged on seeing what had happened to ʽAli's sons that they would start a riot. So he summoned two of the attackers and said to them: "If the Banu Hashim notice this scene and especially if they see here the blood-covered face of al-Hasan, they may scatter the people from around ʽUthman with their swords and thus make all our plans ineffective Therefore it would be. wiser if we enter ʽUthman's house by the wall and take his life quietly."

Then Muhammad and the other two climbed to the roof of an

Ansar's house which was next to 'Uthman's house, and entered the caliph's house. The supporters of 'Uthman saw nothing of this, since in this siege they had all except 'Uthman's wife, gone up on the roofs of houses. When these three entered 'Uthman's house Muhammad said to the other two: "I will enter ahead of you and when you see me holding him between my arms, rush in and kill him with your knives and daggers!"

Saying this he leapt into the room and seized 'Uthman's beard. When 'Uthman saw him, he said sharply: "If your father were here and saw your disrespect to me, he would reproach your deed!"

These words caused Muhammad's hands to tremble, but at this moment the other two accomplices leapt in and with many blows of their daggers killed 'Uthman.(24O)

Ibn Abi al-Hadid writes(241): "On the day that 'Uthman was killed, Talhah who had covered his face with a cloth to hide himself from public eyes, shot arrows at 'Uthman's house and when he saw that the presence of the defenders made it impossible to enter the house and seize 'Uthman, he took his friends to the roof of an Ansar's house and climbed down to 'Uthman's house and killed him."

at-Tabari (242) says this Ansari fellow was 'Amr ibn Hazm and quotes a witness of this event as follows: They went inside 'Amr ibn Hazm's house who was a neighbor of 'Uthman and had a brief clash with the defenders. I swear to God I have not forgotten the moment when Sawdan ibn Hamran came out and cried out: "Where is Talhah? We have killed 'Uthman!"

al-Ba.ladhuri writes (248): When 'Ali learnt of 'Uthman's assassination, he hurried to 'Uthman's house and said to his Sons: How did this happen whereas you stood at the caliph's door? Then he gave one of them a slap on the face and the other a blow on the chest, and in great anger left the house. On his way he came across Talhah who seemed to be as active as before. When he saw 'Ali, he said: "O Abu al-Hasan! What has made you so red in the face and angry?"

'Ali answered: "May God's curse fall upon you! How can one engage in killing a companion of the Prophet?!"

Talhah answered: "If he had driven away Marwan from him, he would not have been killed!"

‘Ali turned away and went back to his house.

The incident of the caliph’s burial

There is a unanimity of view that ‘Uthman’s body was left on the ground for three days until ‘Ali himself intervened for his burial.(244)

at-Tabari writes: The companions of ‘Uthman discussed with ‘Ali the question of the caliph’s burial and requested him to allow ‘Uthman’s family to bury his body. ‘Ali did so and gave them permission.

‘Uthman’s body was escorted by a small number of his family members. They intended to have the body buried in Hash Kawkab, a Jewish cemetery. On seeing the coffin the crowd threw stones at it and rushed to over turn it.

When ‘Mi heard of this matter, he sent a number of people to prevent the crowd from their action and protect the corpse. They did so until they carried it to its destination and buried it in the above-mentioned cemetery.

He was buried in darkness rather late in the evening, and no one was present there except Marwan al-Hakam ‘Uthman’s fifth daughter and three of his servants, making five in all.

At her father’s burial, ‘Uthman’s daughter wailed with lamentation, but at this moment the people threw stones at them and shouted: “Na’thal! Na’thal!”

After Mu’awiyah became caliph, he ordered to pull down the wall of Hash Kawkab cemetery and thus this part was annexed to the al-Baqj’ cemetery.

He ordered also that the Muslims should bury their dead around ‘Uthmans’ grave so as to join this grave to those of the Muslims.

A word with critics

Recently when I was engaged in revising this book and preparing it for publication, I heard that a writer called A.M. had written a critical note of the Arabic original of the book on A'ishah in No. 7 issue of the Journal of Book Guide for the Iranian year 1340 (1961).

I secured a copy of the said journal, and after reading page 696 of No. 273 of it, I realized that the writer's intention had not been to make a scientific and logical criticism of the book, but he has rather had a private motive in taking up this matter; for, he had selected certain passages of the book and had omitted the introduction and conclusion of each part, and in line with his hidden intentions he had purposefully used words and phrases to destroy the books' value as a research work and scientific study, and make such a reliable and worthy book look as lacking all validity and importance.

Some of the objections raised by Mr. A. M. were answered eloquently in the same journal by a clear-sighted scholar for whom I feel a great respect, and he has expressed his appreciation of this research work and defended it worthily. But this time the latter scholar has raised certain other criticisms about the contents of the book which criticisms cannot be disregarded and left unanswered, especially as these objections may also have occurred to other lovers of Islamic subjects and culture.

Now that this book of the Role of 'A'ishah in the History of Islam is being printed for the second time and offered to the public, and the readers are more or less familiar with the contents of the book, it would be worth while, after an

introduction to quote the exact objections of the honorable scholar and those of Mr. A. M. and then answer them.

Falsehoods and fables in important Islamic sources

It should unfortunately be admitted that the history of early Islam is full of lies and calumnies. Many an imaginary and bloody battle has been recorded in them and attributed to the time of Abu Bakr or as victories won during the rule of Abu Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthman none of which has ever taken place nor any blood ever spilt.

On the other hand many a real war has been mingled with fable and irrefutable historical facts have been turned into unbelievable stories and fantastic novels. The great scholar Mr. 'Askari has spent more than forty years of his life on the research and survey of the history of early Islam to discover these bitter truths and found out that these falsehoods and fables have found their way since the beginning of the second century of Hijrah into the valid and important historical sources of Islam through the clever and falsehood-fabricating hands of the genius of the east, namely Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tamimi and his atheistic fellow-thinkers, and they continue to remain the same to the present era.

Mr. 'Askari has introduced in his worthy work of research such works as 'Abd Allah ibn Saba'(245), Ahadith of Umm al Mu'minin 'A'ishah,(246) One hundred and fifty false companions(247) and other works of his to prove the existence of so many lies and fabrications on the basis of definite historical facts, and to show that all those lies and fables have been presented first by at-Tabari as real events in his book and then other historians like Ibn al-Athir in his al-Kamil, Ibn Kathir in his al-Bidayah wa an-nihayah, Ibn Khaldun in his al-'Ibar, Mir Khand in his Rawdat as-safa Ahmad Amin in his Fajr al-Islam Farid Wajdi in his Da'irat al-ma'arif and a number of Orientalists in the Islamic Encyclopedia and other writers in their books have borrowed them from at-Tabari and recorded them.

The book of one hundred and fifty false companions by the present writer is a clear evidence of how so many false companions have been made up for the Prophet and who have

never been created by God, and yet surprisingly enough in their biographies their miraculous acts, poems and traditions have found their way into such credible books as al-Isti'ab, Usd al-ghabah, Tajrid al-Isabah and Ibn 'Asakir's History.

Many a non-existing spot and places on the earth are recorded on the basis of the same fables in such reliable geographical books as Mu'jam a1-buldan, Marasid al-itla' and other works describing their geography and conditions.

Mr. 'Askarj after long years of study and research in hundreds of reliable texts and sources, has found that all these lies and fables have found their way into reliable important Islamic historical sources only through Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tamimi who has also been charged with atheism, God knows how many other fables and lies by other atheists and enemies of Islam are recorded in important and reliable sources of the school of caliphs which have not yet been recognized!

For more than 12 centuries these fables have existed in reliable books, and as Mr. 'Askari states, he has worriedly published a part of them in the lunar year 1375 of Hijrah in his first work entitled 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' al-madkhal, waiting for a reaction to this work.(248)

This book of 'Abd Allah Saba' was first printed and published in an-Najaf, and for the second and third times reprinted in Egypt and Beirut. It has also frequently been printed in India, Turkey and Iran in Turkish, Persian and English languages, and it is received well by men of learning and scholars who have written criticisms and appreciation's of it in reliable journals, thereby encouraging Mr. 'Askari to endeavor and publish the second part of this series of topics which is one of the most significant parts of Islamic history.

Ahadith of Umn-i al-Mu'minin 'A'ishah

Scholars of narration and traditions are well aware that none of the intimates and companions of the Prophet have produced so many traditions about his life and characteristics as 'A'ishah has done.

The traditions of 'A'ishah comprises the first day of revelation of the Prophet to the last moment of his life, and then continues to include the period of her father's caliphate, the

time of his old loyal friend ‘Umar and his successors ‘Uthman and ‘Ali until the rule of Mu’awiyah.

She quotes traditions showing the Prophet’s predictions made related to the events after his life, and contains praises and appreciation’s of Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthman in support of their position as caliphs and their party and followers. There are also available from ‘A’ishah many traditions related to the interpretation of Quranic verses and explanation of Islamic ideas and injunctions.

The total number of traditions narrated from her is 2210 in number, while in the book of Musnad Ahmad alone nearly the same number of traditions has been quoted from her. This number begins with the first days of revelation to the Prophet, whereas we know that she entered the Prophet’s house in Medina a year and a half after the emigration and fifteen years after his ordainment as Prophet, and that she has had only eight years and a few months of joint life with him.

All the writers and scholars who have been engaged in discussing the events of history of early Islam and especially the Prophet’s life, both Orientalists and Muslims (except Shi’ah scholars) have been guided by these same traditions of ‘A’ishah.

The traditions of this lady of early Islam have described all the Prophet’s marriages, whether they have had an injunctional propaganda aspect, or have been effected for political reasons and high interests of Islam and Muslims or for emotional purposes, in such a way as if all of them have been effected by Lust and sexual instincts!

These same traditions of ‘A’ishah which have found their way into all the (reliable and important historical and jurisdictional sources of the followers of caliphs, have served as a bad guide for Orientalists, with the result that they and the enemies of Islam, and friendly-seeming enemies have wounded the founder of Islam with their words by relying on ‘A’ishah’s traditions and consider the Prophet and religion of Islam as lustful and commonplace! It is here that discussion and investigation become necessary for a committed scholar in order to clarify the truth, since this research reveals the facts and will promote religion and its advance.

Consequently this scholar has concentrated the second part

of his important scientific research on a survey of ‘A’ishah’s traditions. But as this research was not possible except through a full understanding of the spirit and mentality of this lady and her likes and dislikes Mr. ‘Askari has, as mentioned already, in the preface by reference to valid historical sources in the first section of this topic described the principal part of her life in which he speaks of her party and political activities, and when necessary he has subjected some of her traditions to a survey and criticism. This part of the book too, has been translated into Persian and printed in three volumes under the title of ‘The Role of ‘A’ishah in the History of Islam”. The second part which contains a comprehensive survey of her traditions will soon go to the press.

Now that the goal of writing this series of topics and evaluation of tradition and Islamic history by the great scholar Mr. ‘Askari have become considerably clear, we turn to the original subject, namely answers to the objections. But as our respected scholar has left some of Mr. A. M.’s criticisms unanswered, we give priority to Mr. A. M. in receiving answers and as we have promised, we will first quote his criticisms and then will answer them.

Mr. A. M.’s criticisms and answers to them

Mr. A. M. writes in the second part of his criticism which is related to the difference of age between ‘A’ishah and the Prophet, as follows [(249):]

C. This difference of age had two results: firstly during her life it created such stories as that of “lfk’ which is reflected in the Qur’an and Safwan and Hassan ibn Thabit as its heroes, and secondly after the Prophet’s death ‘A’ishah was still passing through her youthful and active period and this produced heroic military acts on her part.

A. Firstly concerning the lfk tradition and its related story, we should remember that the tradition is given by ‘A’ishah herself and all its related narration’s end with her person, not to any other source of sources.

On the other hand in the Ifk story there is a mention of personalities who were not alive at the probable time of the occurrence of such an event. Other cases exist, too, which make

the question of lfk doubtful in connection with ‘A’ishah herself.

Moreover there are a number of narration’s and reports which consider the Ifk verse to be a reference to Mariyah, the mother of the only son of the Prophet, and the matters becomes so complicated and painful that God testifies the purity and chastity of that innocent lady and thus it relieves the Muslims and shuts the mouths of babblers.(250)

As we said, the Ifk tradition in the way described by ‘A’ishah is a tradition narrated from her and it is one of the cases discussed by the author in the second part of the book.

Secondly, concerning his statement about the military activities of ‘A’ishah in her youth and the heroic acts of this lady of early Islam, the matter is quite the reverse for according to the verdict of history, after the Prophet’s death, ‘A’ishah spent her youthful years in the time of the rule of her father Abu Bakr and his old friend ‘Umar, and left those years behind in full comfort and tranquility and away from all turmoil, enjoying extraordinary respect and honour, and until the age of forty she never stepped out of her house except two times and even then to make a pilgrimage.

When she entered the period of old age in her fifth decade of life, she began the tumultuous period of activity, heroic deeds and military joys. She accepted the position of commander in chief of the forces in the battle of al-Jamal against ‘Ali, imposed on him by the people despite him own wish, and took part in the battle as an experienced army commander riding a milled camel in the battlefield!

C. Mr. A. M. writes: For example one of the scenes where young Wishah protests angrily against the repeated marriage of the Prophet is as follows: The Prophet declared that any woman who wished so, could place herself at the disposal of the Prophet, and he could select anyone he liked and reject anyone he did not want, and in confirmation of this decision the verse descended allowing his freedom of choice. Then ‘A’ishah became angry and said to the Prophet: “O Muhammad! God, too, seems to fulfill your wishes!”

A. If you read the above account more carefully and compare it with the exact Arabic phrases the translation of which will be given below, you will see the difference:

According to al-Bukhari and Muslim 'A'ishah said: I felt vexed with the women who offered themselves to the Prophet without expecting a dowry and said to him: "Would a free-born woman offer herself?" At this time the following verse descended: Keep away any of your wives you wish, and keep any of them you desire, and if you call back to yourself the one you have sent away, there is no offence on your part.

1 said to him: "I see that God approves of your wish."

Here you can see that not only no declaration, which Mr. A. M. claims, is made by the Prophet, but no such declaration is seen in the whole book or any book of traditions and biography, and no woman has ever been taken in marriage by the Prophet the way described by Mr. A. M. He considers the Prophet a pleasure-loving lover of women and in using words below the dignity of the Prophet attributes such a story to him.

Would the, writings of Mr. A. M. not be an evidence of his idea and opinion of Islam and its prophet?

Mr. A. M. writes:

C. "While the Prophet was in bed with 'A'ishah he received the companions. Such a story is quoted in the first part of the book. 'A'ishah said: "I was in bed with the Prophet when Abu Bakr arrived and was allowed to enter. Then 'Umar came and was admitted in the same way, and only when 'Uthman arrived the Prophet covered himself."

A. I ask the reader to refer once more to the former chapter on the 'period of support and confirmation' about this story where one of 'A'ishah's traditions about 'Uthman has been considered, and see the great difference between the quoted tradition and Mr. A. M.'s statement. He has omitted the first and last part of the tradition as well as the criticisms of the exalted scholar on the basis of which he has refuted that tradition, and thus he has fabricated his own version of it in accordance with his motive, whereas such a treason is most indecent coming from an educated person.

C. Mr. A. M. writes: When 'All went to Basra for the battle of al-Jamal, Hafsah and minstrels of Medina made the following song:

A. We are compelled to quote here the translation of the exact words of the book of 'A'ishah's Traditions about the story

which is written on page 137 of that book as follows:

'Abu Mikhnaf narrates: When 'Ali reached Dhu Qar [251], 'A'ishah wrote to Hafsah, daughter of 'Umar as follows: I must say that 'Ali has arrived at Dhu Qar and is worried and perplexed on hearing about our great military forces and equipment there. For, if he retreats one step, he shies off like a horse, and if he advances one step, he collapses and is vanquished.

When Hafsah received the letter, she ordered her slave- girls to arrange festivity and beat the tambourine and sing this song:

The at-Tulaqa'[252] girls gathered in Hafsah's house to hear that song. The news reached Umm Kulthum, daughter of 'Ali. She covered herself with a robe and veil and went to Hafsah's place with an anonymous group and then in the heat of their merry-making started by Hafsah, Umm Kulthum removed her veil, and on seeing her Hafsah was greatly embarrassed and uttered: "We are from God and return to Him." Umm Kulthum said: "It is not something new for you and 'A'ishah to join hands against him. It was only yesterday that with each other's aid you rose against his brother, the Prophet, and God punished you as you deserved." Hafsah answered: "That is enough, may God favour you!" Then she asked to bring 'A'ishah's letter, tore it up and begged God's forgiveness.[253]

Do you now see Mr. A. M.'s evil intention? God knows what he has in mind. He begins his criticism of the book by insulting the lofty position of the Imam, and as you read, he has omitted the first and last part of the subject and has offended the holy personality of the leader of the world's pious believers, whereas the honorable author had intended to show the inner feelings of these two ladies of early Islam, namely the daughters of the first two caliphs, Abu Bakr and 'Umar, towards Imam 'Ali and at the same time to refer to chapter at-Tahrim which is an admonishment of 'A'ishah and Hafsah who aided each other to hurt the Prophet.

The points mentioned by Mr. A. M. in the journal of Book Guide for introducing the book are with one exceptions answered elaborately by our exalted scholar and were quoted to show that:

1-Mr. A. M. as a would-be trustworthy writer has never

shown any sincerity and trustworthiness in quoting the contents of the book. By omitting the significant parts of a book which is written scientifically and which is based on more than forty years of research by the author he has lowered it to the rank of a simple and unscientific book and has introduced it as such to the world of learning, and has thus shown his evil intention, Indeed no more than this can be expected from the writer of the book of "Twenty-three Years" in order to refute Islam and his prophet.

2-What Mr. A. M. has written in the name of introducing the book is in fact an account of his own attitude and thought about the history of early Islam and its chaste and honest prophet. For the works of the great scholar Mr. 'Askari which are written on the evaluation of tradition and history, beginning with 'Abd Allah ibn Saba' al-madkhal, have been printed and published for a quarter of a century and placed at the disposal of experts and scholars of the east and west, and have been subjected to survey and discussion by such great literary and religious and scientific circles of the world as al-Azhar of Egypt, to be followed by a series of profound investigations, as well as wonder and praise of his works. But as this welcome and these reactions shown by the great scholars of the world to Mr. 'Askari's book have assumed a scientific and technical aspect, and have been produced in all sincerity and absence of fanaticism and private motives, they have not reached Mr. A. M.'s ears who has imagined that he can easily undermine the worth of scientific and technical researches.

A word with the writer

We said at the beginning that a fine scholar who is greatly respected by us and from whose books and lectures I have greatly benefited, has answered some parts of Mr. A. M.'s criticisms in a long article printed in No. 9 of the journal of Book Guide. He himself has also made some criticisms about the book that, irrespective of his exalted position as a scholar and man of learning and as I hope to give priority to truth, therefore, after quoting his exact objections and criticisms, we will deal with and answer them.

He writes on page 895 of the said journal as follows:

C. I cannot yet predict the success or failure of Mr. 'Askari in his objective, to see whether the effect of the book is to make 'A'ishah's Traditions lose their validity for those who consider them reliable, or whether they make the fanatics for or against 'A'ishah more fanatical in their prejudice.

A. The rain falls and produces tulips in the garden and motes in the swamp. All are unanimous about the fineness of rain, but its effect varies on different lands. This matter is not confined only to the book of the great scholar. Every psychological and religious book has such a fate. Do you believe that the book of Abu Hurayrah by the great Sayyid Sharaf ad-Din al-'Amili who has cruelly attacked Abu Hurayrah and his traditions and whose book you yourself have praised, is an exception to this rule, remembering the position of Abu Hurayrah in the Sunni community and among the followers of the school of caliphs? Whereas many books have been written refuting him and ash-Shaykh Mahmud Abu Rayh, while no such robuttal has been written on any works of Mr. 'Askari.

When a definite scientific fact is discovered, do you think it permissible to hide the truth merely for a regard for the public and their fanaticism? You yourself know well that this prejudice is worth studying, not only in the ordinary and illiterate class of people, but also in the learned and scholarly class. If one were to abstain from telling the truth because of a regard for the prejudice of either of the two groups who were supporters or opposers, and scientific matters were to be concealed, would the level of knowledge and vision rise to this amazing extent?

We know that in the present world and in the open space which is created for stating truth, the door of excuse is shut to both scholars and human society, and the number of narrow-minded people and religious sectarians has considerably een reduced.

You have written:

C. What Mr. 'Askari may surely be criticized for, is his negligence about a basic question. He has forgotten that owing to Christian propaganda and the fanning up of this fire by a particular group, a special sensitivity has been created today in the minds of the young concerning the Prophet's plurality of marriage, a sensitivity which exists also about the wars of early

Islam.

A. Our dear scholar knows that the enemies of Islam, especially Christian missionaries as Orientalists have for hundreds of years obtained most of our precious books at the highest prices, and having long been engaged in the discussion and criticism of them. Long before us they have even printed our books especially those of the Sunnis and congregation, together with their scientific research and technical indices in Europe, and have even made an index of the Quranic vocabulary. One of their scholars has prepared an index of fourteen sets of the most reliable books of traditions and biographies of the outstanding personalities of Islamic history, explaining each tradition or topic on the basis of more than fifty books. They have even made an index of the vocabulary of tradition which is far more voluminous than the previous index. The researchers of Brockelmann in history and literature is a source of reference in the world. They have experts for every corner of the Islamic realm and for every century of Islam. Thus the malicious have no need of our writing. They have access to whatever they want, and whenever they decide, they can engage in writing either self-interestedly or impartially.

In view of all this, if we investigate and be convinced that the source of all those misrepresentations about the Prophet's marriages and even about some jurisprudentially verdicts and interpretation of some Quranic verses, and chapters is derived from these same traditions attribute to 'A'ishah, and discover that such traditions are untrue, should w& remain silent and leave a weapon in the hands of the enemies of Islam?

Dear Sir! To what goal do you invite the people of our time by your book and your pleasant lectures? Is your goal anything but Islam and acceptance of its truths? If you recognize right would you disregard it for the sake of wrong and remain silent? Or on the contrary would you disregard matters of time, place, conditions of the day, transitory wishes and tastes of a particular group of people, and would according to your duty reveal what is right and true, and thus pay your debt?

Concerning your reference to the wars of early Islam, fortunately Mr. 'Askari has openly and elaborately revealed the true visage of historical facts as a result of his valuable

scientific researches in his book of one hundred and fifty false companions, the first volume of which has been translated and printed by myself. He has, in his second volume of 'Abd Allah ibn Saba', proved at length the invalidity of the idea that Islam was advanced with the sword.

Therefore, the investigation of such matters and declaration *of* truth do not only create no danger for the Muslims and Islam, but they will also promote its greatness and advance. If any danger might exist it is in the mind and spirit of some of us who with our poverty of knowledge retreat before the wrong criticisms of individuals who are fascinated by the propaganda of the same Orientalists, and thus show our weakness.

It is not our duty to interpret Islam and its truth according to the wishes of these people or conceal it, and drag Islam behind their ideas. On the contrary it is our duty to declare what is right and attract them towards Islam, and place the truth on their table and let them discuss and investigate it freely.

C. You have written: The author has not foreseen that these same seemingly baseless matters will one day be printed in a dignified journal by a critic under the title of "Historical points" in the name of fresh discoveries about the life of the Prophet of Islam.

A. Our dear scholar knows that the misuse of a matter by an individual or individuals does not prevent a person from writing a book, especially such valid books. You have surely read in the same journal, page 697 No. 277 the reference to the subject of cleanliness, as stated by the writer who introduces the book. If you have not, this is what he writes:

"The book of cleanliness (or ceremonious purification of the body) by Muhammad Taqj Majlisi, Part One, Tehran, 'Ilmji Brothers, year 1340 is in 1032 pages. This voluminous book of one thousand pages is a description of ceremonious cleanliness from a well-known book of jurisprudence, and it is the first volume of it. Is cleanliness such a difficult and problematic matter that its discussion does not end even in one thousand pages?!"

You see the result of malevolence! Thus the late Majlisi is criticized why he has written such an elaborate book that

compels a critic to write about it in a dignified journal!

C. Our dear scholar has written: The author has quoted some of these matters and he has left his analysis and criticism for the second volume of the book. Thus he has paved the way for doubt in the form of cash and has left its removal on credit.

A. We hope that our explanations will serve to answer his criticism, We have already stated in the introduction to this chapter that Mr. ‘Askari has postponed the discussion and survey of ‘A’ishah’s traditions to the second volume of this book. He has devoted Volume One to a description of the mentality, spirit, morals and significant acts of ‘A’ishah during the time of the Prophet, the two elder caliphs and his two sons-in-law, and he has cited as example a tradition of hers whenever necessary, and has discussed it, showing its weak points and implied objections and proving its falsity and baselessness. Therefore the removal of doubt has not been effected on credit.

C. The dear scholar writes: A decisive expression of opinion in such matters depends on a high council of well-informed and discerning experts which can guide our religious propaganda and publications towards high Islamic interests, or it can at least check such chaos and confusion. But unfortunately we lack such a council, though we hope that this idea will soon be put into practice.

A. It would have been proper if our dear scholar had not made a hasty prejudgment and before deciding to make this strong protest he had contacted well-versed persons and centers of learning to find out the views of world scholars, especially those of Egyptian universities such as Dr. Hamid Hafni Dawud professor of the language chair and ash-Shaykh Mahmud Abu Rayh about Mr. ‘Askari’s book.

We ask our learned master to refer to the words of those two great Egyptian scholars, a part of which is quoted in the introduction of this book and to the statement of Abu Rayh which has been given in the introduction of Volume Two, and then find out what discussions have taken place between leading Sunni and congregation scholars about this and other words of Mr. ‘Askari, and what praises are bestowed on him. Then he can compare his judgment in the research center of Iran with the conclusion of the leaders of the school of caliphs

and Sunni and congregation followers in the Sunni center of Egypt concerning the scientific researches of Mr. 'Askari and then sit in judgment and say in all fairness what a great difference exists between the two.

C. Our dear scholar writes: I do not claim that I can clarify this part of the Prophet's life in this brief article. It is Mr. 'Askari's duty in view of his negligence in this book, to write a comprehensive treatise on this subject for his Persian-speaking compatriots?

A. At this stage the supposition comes to the mind that our learned scholar may have left our reading that part of the book which has been improperly and unfairly criticized by Mr. A. M.

We ask what negligence has been committed by Mr. 'Askari for which he must offer atonement? You should have first read his introduction to see that his intention has not been to write a history book or describe the life of the Prophet and his wives especially that of 'A'ishah. Therefore there has been no negligence to require expiation.

It seems that we are compelled once more to state that the author has reached the conclusion after spending long years of his life in the survey and study of various literary, jurisprudentially, traditional and historical texts of early Islam, that the quotation and forging of annals and false happenings in historical text, as well as untrue narration of traditions by their narrators, have diverted the history of Islam from its true course and have exhibited the visage of Islam to the world quite the reverse of what it has really been. It is for this reason that Orientalists and enemies of Islam by relying on these forgeries and fables of Sayf ibn 'Umar at-Tamimi have confronted Islam and have scoffed at the Prophet and at the holy religion of Islam.

Now I quote a point of yours about Mr. A. M. you have written on page 896 of the journal:

C. To my mind however much one wishes to attribute it to propriety, yet one sees signs of malevolence in this article. (Then you add the reason for it and say:) For, firstly the critic himself is aware that the selected parts are all distorted and subject to criticism and the author of the book himself has protected against their validity. Nevertheless like a person who

has produced an evidence of a crime against someone, he has selected some pungent sections in connection with the Prophet and given them the name of "Historical points".

A. In view of the scholar's diagnosis concerning the existence of malevolence in the article of Mr. A. M. in introducing the book, now the question arises: "Does there remain any more room for criticism, and objection towards the book of 'A'ishah's traditions?"

Tehran, Deymah, 1355 Iranian year (1976)
'Ata Muhammad Sardar-Niya